



Edited by Hafeez Malik

**Dilemmas of National Security  
and Cooperation  
in India and Pakistan**

# **DILEMMAS OF NATIONAL SECURITY AND COOPERATION IN INDIA AND PAKISTAN**



*Also by Hafeez Malik*

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# **Dilemmas of National Security and Cooperation in India and Pakistan**

Edited by

**Hafeez Malik**

*Professor of Political Science  
Villanova University, Pennsylvania*



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*With affection to Javid Iqbal, whose dynamic interpretations of Shah Waliy Allah, Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan, and his own father, Dr Muhammad Iqbal, nourish progressive Islam, interfaith tolerance, and co-existence between India and Pakistan.*

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# Preface

This collective scholarly endeavour is essentially a three-dimensional analysis of: (1) India–Pakistan interaction; (2) their relations with the superpowers; and (3) their approaches to the regional states of Iran, Afghanistan, Turkey and China, the major power in Asia. While India aspires to play a global role, and feels that by virtue of her size and power, no Asian issue should be resolved without her vigorous participation, Pakistan's foreign policy, when not dealing with the United States, the countries that formed the USSR, and China, is in reality bi-regional. Located strategically between the Middle East, especially the Persian Gulf region, the former Soviet Union and China, Pakistan plays upon the strategic advantages which history and geography have bestowed upon it. Simultaneously or alternately, Pakistan utilises its Islamic heritage to carve out a niche in the Islamic world.

In these regions, Pakistan's foreign policy often endeavours to minimise, if not exclude, the Indian influence. This aspect of Pakistan's foreign policy collides with the aspirations of India, which makes India resentful of Pakistan and frustrated in the expression of (what India intuitively feels) her rightful impulse of power. The reconciliation of these dialectically opposed orientations is one of the fundamental dilemmas of the India–Pakistan equation.

Since the dawn of independence, in 1947, India and Pakistan have fought two and a half wars over Kashmir, and the end is not in sight yet. Currently (1989–91), an effort is being made by the people of Kashmir to exercise the right of self-determination which was vouchsafed to them by India, Pakistan and the United Nations in 1948–9. However, with the passage of time, policies in India, as well as in Pakistan, have congealed and any territorial compromise is viewed strictly in terms of zero sum game. Pakistan views Kashmir as the cause of conflict between the two neighbours, whereas in the Indian perception Kashmir is merely a reflection of the deep-seated malaise in the historical relations between the Hindus and the Muslims. To others, Kashmir also appears as a symbol of the struggle for power between the two nations.

Kashmir might have deepened antagonistic nationalisms in India and Pakistan, but as the two states began to act as independent players in the contemporary diplomatic system, external influences also began to impinge upon their national strategies. Their need for economic aid, and the imperatives of national security, began to offer opportunities for the

exogenous superpowers to draw them into their orbit. This psychological chasm widened the gaps in their foreign and security policies. As India developed, and flexed its muscles to defeat Pakistan in 1971 in order to create the state of Bangladesh, India also began to claim a hegemonial role in South Asia. Despite India's well-meaning claims that South Asian peoples were a joint family, where the senior member is expected to be tolerant and generous and, above all, caring of others, India's policy towards Pakistan was the acme of power politics, which nourished the most truculent instincts in Pakistan's psychology and political culture. The Gandhian generosity of soul died with the noble Mahatma's assassination. This has also been the bane of India-Pakistan relations.

Unlike the Palestinians, and the Zionists, whose relationship is intensely negative and calculatingly destructive – a process which has caused the Palestinians the loss of their homeland – the Hindu-Muslim relationship has remained dialectical, combining the opposites of love and hate. This dialectic has been the catalytic force, generating mutual repulsion and limited cooperation, suspicions and wars, and constraints on peaceful coexistence and mutual recognition. Indeed India and Pakistan need a political psychoanalysis to curb their negative emotions in order to strengthen cooperation and eliminate their mini cold war, which has been so debilitating and destructive of graceful coexistence in South Asia.

In order to analyse various aspects of the India-Pakistan equation an international seminar was organised at Villanova University in November 1990. Fifteen American, Soviet, Pakistani and Indian scholars participated with their well-crafted chapters to present a multi-dimensional analysis of India-Pakistan relations. Among the participants were scholars from other universities, some diplomats and members of the US military from the Pentagon and other bases around the United States, and some well-informed Indians and Pakistanis. In fact, for the first time, at least to my knowledge, Indian and Pakistani scholars encountered each other in discussing South Asian problems objectively, albeit passionately. Invaluable insights regarding the dilemmas of national security and cooperation were brought to the discussions, which are incorporated in this volume.

Between India and Pakistan, who is 'right' and who is 'wrong', who is 'angelic' and who is 'demonic'? No judgemental perspectives have been offered, at least consciously. There is plenty of blame to go around. An attempt has been made, in good faith as well as in good will, to highlight the dilemmas of national security and cooperation in India and Pakistan. Perhaps this attempt will generate more dialogue between Indian and Pakistani scholars and statesmen. That is all that I have dared to hope.



Villanova University, where the seminar was held, has not only been an intellectual haven for me, but it has generously supported over the last 17 years the *Journal of South Asian and Middle Eastern Studies*, the Pakistan–American Foundation, and the American Institute of Pakistan Studies. They have also received generous support from the Ministry of Education of the Government of Pakistan. I am equally indebted to Edmund J. Dobbin (President), Lawrence Gallen (Vice President of Academic Affairs), and Kail C. Ellis (Dean of Arts and Sciences), and Director of the Center for Contemporary Arab and Islamic Studies of Villanova University. Fr. Ellis also presided over one of the sessions of the seminar and managed to keep the Indian and Pakistani scholarly temperatures cool.

Among my friends, I single out Nadia Barsoum, who helped me in many ways to make this seminar a successful enterprise. Some of my friends, both in the United States and abroad, have always been a source of encouragement and support: Yuri V. Gankovsky, Sharif al-Mujahid, Riaz Malik, Afaq Haydar, Jack Schrems, Maya Chadda, Lori Kephart, Syed Abid Ali, Zaheer Chaudhary, M. Imtiaz Ali, Riaz Ahmad, Stanley Wolpert, Muhammad Ali Chaudhary, Salam Shahidi and (Akhuna) Khalil Ilyas. I value their friendship and cherish their affection. My Administrative Assistant, Susan K. Hausman, handled the details of the seminar with her usual efficiency and imaginative skills.

Last, but not least, the seminar honoured a dear friend, and a great jurist of Pakistan, Dr Justice Javid Iqbal, who recently retired from the Supreme Court of Pakistan. His presence in the seminar elevated the level of scholarly discourse.

*Villanova University*

HAFEEZ MALIK

# An Afterword

A word of explanation regarding the Soviet Union's role in these confabulations is in order. When the seminar was held in November 1990 none of the participants (and Soviet specialists elsewhere) thought that the Soviet Union would dissolve itself in December 1991. Consequently, some of the futuristic observations about the Soviet role in South Asia sound anachronistic. However, one should not ignore the fact that Russia has officially assumed the role of a successor state to the USSR, while Russia now controls only 60 per cent of the Soviet territory and has 150 million population. Yet Russia has inherited a large number of assets, which are: 90 per cent of oil, nearly 80 per cent of the natural gas, 62 per cent of the electricity, 70 per cent of the gold and, last but not least, 70 per cent of the trained workers. It is estimated that if Russia traded with former Soviet republics at world prices, it would have an annual trade surplus of 19 billion. Clearly, these assets would enable Russia to play a significant political role at the regional and global levels sometime in the future.

Yet, Russia would not be a superpower – a position which compelled the United States to respect Soviet global interests and not threaten her regional friends. This aspect of relationship has conspicuously changed. India, the major Soviet strategic collaborator, was quick enough to grasp the consequences of the Soviet dissolution and hastened to move toward closer political and military relations with the United States. In March 1992, India agreed to hold joint naval exercises with the United States in the Indian Ocean. India's position also changed on the nuclear issue. While sticking to her frequently reiterated position that the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty discriminated in favour of advanced nuclear powers, India offered to hold preparatory talks with the United States, which could prepare for five-power meetings proposed by Pakistan on regional nuclear control. In addition to India and Pakistan, the talks would include the United States, China and probably Russia.

However, the United States was quick to threaten trade sanctions against Russia and India in May 1992 when it was known that Russia was planning to sell missile technology to India, which would enable India to develop giant rockets to launch satellites into space. The United States gave three explanations for her forceful objection: (1) if India acquired the technology for a cryogenic rocket engine, it would be 'dangerous and of

great concern to the United States'; (2) the sale would also put 'Pakistan, a longstanding military and political friend of the United States, at a major strategic and military disadvantage against India'; (3) the sale would violate the 1987 missile control agreement (*New York Times*, 3 May 1992). However, neither Russia nor India has signed the Missile Control Agreement of 1987. Responding to American pressure, President Boris N. Yeltsin of Russia ordered a pause in carrying out a Russia-India contract for sale while Indian scientists and Russian and American officials try to resolve the issue. Regardless of the outcome, it is doubtful that the United States would have intervened so effectively with the Soviet Union, especially during the Cold War.

That Russia will play the role of a junior partner to the United States at the global level and at the United Nations is a foregone conclusion. How long Russia's subordinate role will last is open to speculation: perhaps from five to ten years from now is a reasonable estimate. Meanwhile, Russia will attempt to restructure the socialist command economy to market economy, and change the Communist rule to a democratic pattern. The twin processes will not be easy to complete; the pitfalls of military *coup d'état* and civilian dictatorship in the name of law and order, and the Russian motherland, remain a distinct possibility. Meanwhile, the United States would remain the sole superpower at the global level.

This author observed in April 1992 an intense debate raging within Russia about its future foreign policy. Two schools of thought collided with each other: one school wants Russia to join what is called the civilisation and to cut its losses in the east. The second school of thought maintains that Russia is basically a Eurasian state and would turn its back on Asia to its own peril. This school accuses the Yeltsin government of having no coherent foreign policy toward the Central Asian and Southwest Asian states, which share common borders and history with Russia. With Russian *élan vital* damaged, some Russian scholars maintain that Russia, instead of having a national foreign policy in the East and the West, is simply quagmired in a demoralising state of capitulation to the United States. According to this view, Russia, for some time to come, is incapable of formulating an independent foreign policy. Each view basically reflected a sense of gloom and doom, which has descended upon the architects of a disintegrating empire. How long would this state of mind last is anybody's guess!

# Notes on the Contributors

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**Mushahid Hussain** is an internationally known political commentator of Pakistan whose syndicated column appears in several newspapers in Pakistan and Iran. Formerly he was Editor of *The Daily Muslim*, Islamabad, Pakistan.

**Javid Iqbal** recently retired as Justice of the Supreme Court of Pakistan. Before joining the Supreme Court, he was Chief Justice of the High Court of the Punjab at Lahore. He has authored several books and articles on Islamic developments in Pakistan.

**Hafeez Malik** is Professor of Political Science at Villanova University in Pennsylvania. From 1961 to 1963, and from 1966 to 1984, he was Visiting Lecturer at the Foreign Service Institute of the US Department of State. An author/editor of several books and numerous articles, he was from 1971 to 1974 President of the Pakistan Council of the Asia Society, New York. Also, he is President of the Pakistan–American Foundation, founding Director (1973–88) of the American Institute of Pakistan Studies, and since 1977 Editor of the *Journal of South Asian and Middle Eastern Studies*, and Executive Director of the American Council for the Study of Islamic Societies since 1983.

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**Thomas P. Thornton** is Adjunct Professor of Soviet and Asian Studies at the Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies; he is particularly concerned with South Asia. He has served on the Policy Planning Staff of the Department of State and, during the Carter administration, as a Senior Member of the National Security Council Staff.

His most recent publication is *The Challenge to US Policy in the Third World: Global Responsibility and Regional Devolution* (1986).

**Robert G. Wirsing** is Professor of International Relations at the University of South Carolina. He has also been Visiting Professor of International Studies at the US Army John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center, Ft Bragg, North Carolina. He has published several books and numerous articles.

**Lawrence Ziring** is Professor of Political Science at Western Michigan University. He has lived, worked, studied and travelled in Pakistan over a period of 21 years. He was an adviser to the Pakistan Administrative Staff College from 1964 to 1966 and he is the author, co-author and editor of five books either dealing specifically with Pakistan or containing sections about Pakistani politics and foreign policy. He has had articles published in many journals and has contributed chapters to numerous books.

# 1 Dilemmas of National Security and Cooperation

Hafeez Malik

## I

India and Pakistan have existed for 45 years as independent and sovereign states in South Asia. In a seminar at Villanova University in November (1990), a collective effort was made by American, Soviet, Indian and Pakistani scholars to assess the security concerns of these two states, their relations with the United States and the Soviet Union, and the impact of their internal political dynamics on their foreign policies. Also, an attempt was made to explore the possibilities of regional cooperation between the South Asian states as against the prospects of regional cooperation among the Southwest Asian states of Pakistan, Iran, Afghanistan and Turkey.

Pakistan's geopolitical position is unique in some ways. Geographically, it is linked with India, and is in close proximity to the Persian/Arabian Gulf, the former Soviet Union and China. There is a 371-mile border between Xinjiang Province of China and the Northern Areas of Pakistan; while Afghanistan's Wakhan Corridor, varying in width from 7 to 31 miles, divides the Tajik SSR of the former Soviet Union from Pakistan along 188 miles. Also, Pakistan has enjoyed extensive peaceful borders with Iran, while the boundary with Afghanistan along the Durand Line has been periodically turbulent. Located at the head of the Arabian Sea, Pakistan flanks the entrance to the oil-rich Gulf and is strategically placed in relation to the sea-lanes between Europe and the Indian Ocean. Pakistan's unique geostrategic position, and her cultural, religious and historical links with Soviet Central Asia and the Middle East, have made it possible for her to play a dual strategic role in South Asia, and in the larger world of Islam, especially the Gulf states and states in Southwest Asia.

Since independence in 1947, India has emerged as a major player in world politics. India's foreign policy has had impact far beyond South Asia, while she has played since 1971 a leading role among the South Asian states. However, the thrust of Indian foreign policy, both in its political orientation and in its specific interaction with a wide variety of states, has been global. During the 1980s and 1990s India interacted with

40–50 states. Largely, this interaction was more of an ‘involvement with the problems of mankind as a whole’, rather than deep bilateral relations like those of the superpowers. Indian analysts have maintained that ‘the countries which occupied center-stage in India’s diplomatic activity were not more than half-dozen’.<sup>1</sup> Specifically, these countries were: (1) South Asian states; (2) China; (3) the Soviet Union; (4) Britain; and (5) the United States.<sup>2</sup> In terms of the depth of bilateral relations, Pakistan probably interacted with a larger number of states than India. In addition to some countries of western Europe, the 44 states of the Muslim world remain, despite occasional stresses and strains in relations with some, a congenial universe for Pakistan’s diplomacy.

Thus, there appears to be a gap between the rhetoric of Indian diplomacy’s global pretensions and what a perceptive Indian analyst calls ‘the reality of India’s foreign policy concerns’. This chasm is by no means a permanent factor in the projection of India’s power; it merely reflects, at this point in her economic underdevelopment, her inability ‘to translate its foreign policy concerns into action’.<sup>3</sup> This situation, other things being equal, could certainly change in the twenty-first century.

Throughout the 1980s and early 1990s Pakistan remained, for Indian diplomacy, what the Indian analysts called ‘the most nagging problem’. This was comparatively better than the pre-1971 description, when Pakistan was looked upon as a threat to India’s security, and to her rise to global eminence. Also, this description reflected India’s increased self-confidence borne up by her Soviet-aided industrial and military development, and by her victory over Pakistan in establishing Bangladesh.

However, the specific issues which continued to sour relations between the two states were: (1) Pakistan’s suspicions that India abetted ethnic conflict in Sindh in the wake of the Pakistan national movement; (2) Indian allegations that Pakistan rendered assistance to Sikhs, who have resorted to an armed struggle against India in order to achieve self-determination; (3) military confrontation over the Siachen Glacier, which is located on the Kashmir line of control established by the Simla Agreement of 1972; (4) India’s not too far-fetched contention that Pakistan has continually assisted Kashmiri militants, who have, since 1989, launched an armed struggle in the Kashmir Valley to gain self-determination through a UN supervised plebiscite to which India was committed in 1947–8: a solemn international commitment on which India reneged in 1956; and (5) last, but not least, Pakistan’s nuclear programme, and its possible military dimensions, which have also bedevilled Pakistan’s relations with the United States.

Consequently, the United States terminated its economic and military



assistance programmes in Pakistan in 1991, a welcome development, to India. However, on the nuclear issue, India and Pakistan have taken an act of great wisdom. They agreed in 1985 not to attack each other's nuclear installations; and then signed a formal agreement in December 1988. Finally, in January 1991, the two states exchanged the instruments of ratification on this agreement. Hopefully, this process of damage control will continue to tackle the complex issue of regional non-proliferation.

A dispassionate reviewer of Indo-Pakistani relations discerns an underlying trend in their antagonistic history: all pragmatic problems, where issues of prestige and 'ideological' pretensions are not involved, do find more or less equitable solution. The only issue, rooted in the era of partition, which continually escapes therapeutic diplomacy is the princely state of Kashmir, while the establishment of Bangladesh with Indian arms has deepened doubts in Pakistan about India's intentions regarding her security and territorial integrity. Also, taking advantage in Sri Lanka of the exclusive occupation of the Jaffna peninsula by the Tamil population's militant organisation, the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), in January 1987, India interjected herself as a mediator between the Sri Lankan government and the LTTE. Finally, Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi of India signed an agreement in July 1987 with J. R. Jayewardene, President of Sri Lanka, which virtually reduced Sri Lanka to the status of Bhutan, an Indian protectorate in the Himalayas. Soon after this agreement, when India sent some 1500 troops to solve Sri Lanka's ethnic problem, the action was compared to the imperial presence of Soviet troops in Afghanistan. Ironically, neither the United States nor Pakistan made much fuss over the projection of Indian power in Sri Lanka, both were by then heavily involved in Afghanistan checkmating Soviet intrusion.

Consequently, in Pakistan's security calculations and foreign-policy determinations, India's intentions towards Pakistan are always regarded as malignant, and then emphasis is placed on the nature of each country's military capability. This judgement then leads Pakistan to balance India's military preparedness in the form of bilateral and multilateral alliances with exogenous powers. Conversely, India, in order to retain a military edge over Pakistan, other South Asian states, and especially China, cemented her strategic collaboration with the Soviet Union by virtue of her Treaty of Friendship of 1971.

This lethal relationship is the hub of dilemma of national security and cooperation between India and Pakistan, and it has spawned at least five theories about India-Pakistan's 'coexistence'. Some of these theories are sophisticated, some are really simple explanations concocted to justify

chauvinistic postures, some are popular in Pakistan, and some in India – all are self-serving. To contemplate their landscape might be rewarding especially in understanding various dimensions of the foreign policies of India and Pakistan.

#### NEGATIVE ATTITUDE OF JAWAHARLAL NEHRU (1889–1964) TOWARDS INDIA–PAKISTAN RELATIONS

A secular nationalist leader of great stature, Nehru did not accept Pakistan as a settled fact of South Asia's political landscape. For the first eighteen years of India's independent existence, he was the sole architect of India's foreign policy. His policies and actions towards Kashmir and Pakistan laid the foundations for his successors' attitudes. Michael Brecher says: '[Nehru] has impressed his personality and his views with such overpowering effect that foreign policy may properly be termed a private monopoly.'<sup>4</sup> He repeatedly stated that he wanted friendly relations with Pakistan, but never adopted a pragmatic policy to implement this objective.<sup>5</sup>

In order to fully comprehend Nehru's role his critics, as well as his admirers, have spotlighted some of his personal predilections, and his settled political convictions, including his (1) faith in his own infallibility and superiority complex; (2) faith in the Marxist philosophy and the parliamentary form of democracy; (3) secularism; (4) love for Kashmir; and (5) the ideology of non-alignment in foreign policy. The first point being self-evident, the other three might be explained to demonstrate their impact on India's policy towards Pakistan.

In discussing the Marxist interpretation of history, Nehru stated: 'Russia apart, the theory and philosophy of Marxism lightened so many a dark corner of my mind. History came to have a new meaning for me. The Marxist interpretation threw a flood of light on it, and it became an unfolding drama with some order and purpose, however unconscious, behind it ... It was the essential freedom from dogma, and the scientific outlook of Marxism that appealed to me.'<sup>6</sup> Like a Marxist thinker, Nehru developed an antipathy toward religion, and viewed Hindu-Muslim political conflict before 1947 primarily in terms of economics. He thought that all 'Muslim communal organizations [including Jinnah's Muslim League, the founder of Pakistan] are notoriously reactionary from every point of view – political, economic and social.'<sup>7</sup> Criticising one of the poet-philosopher, Dr Muhammad Iqbal's articles, Nehru stated in his own *A Reply to Sir Muhammad Iqbal* that there was absolutely no racial or

cultural difference between the Hindu and Muslim masses.<sup>8</sup> Consequently, there was in his eyes no justification for the creation of Pakistan, but he accepted its creation in 1947 merely as an unavoidable and a temporary necessity.

When Pakistan had established itself and was internationally recognised as a sovereign independent state, and had entered into an allied relationship with the United States in 1954, Nehru believed that the solution of problems facing both countries, especially in Kashmir, was for them to form a confederation. He officially proposed this project to Pakistan on two separate occasions: (1) in December 1962 when India suffered a defeat at the hands of China; and (2) in April 1964, a few weeks before his death, when he sent Sheikh Abdullah straight from his prison to Pakistan to parley with President Muhammad Ayub Khan for an India–Pakistan Confederation. He expressed the same wish in a speech to Lok Sabha (Indian Parliament) on 13 April 1964. Clearly, Nehru till the last day of his life did not see relations with Pakistan as a part of India's foreign policy.

To Nehru the establishing of India as a secular state was his greatest achievement. By the same logic he could not accept Pakistan but as a tragedy, since the new state claimed to be the largest Muslim state in the world at its inception. Selig Harrison, an astute observer of the Indian political dynamics, has made a telling comment on Nehru, and Indian secularism: 'It is increasingly clear that secularism as Nehru conceived of it died with him.... Nehru was unable to make secularism more than a thin overlay on the vast Congress organization with its base in orthodox rural India.'<sup>9</sup> Since 1964, in the post-Nehru period, all Indian prime ministers have refused to negotiate with Pakistan over the settlement of the Kashmir dispute, because it would vitiate Indian secularism.

Nehru's 'love' for Kashmir gradually became a political legend in his lifetime. He remarked to a British officer about Kashmir in romantically personal terms: 'In the same way that Calais was written on Mary's heart, Kashmir is written on mine.'<sup>10</sup> In 1952 he stated in the Lok Sabha: 'Our history and our circumstances had made Kashmir so closely associated with our feelings, our emotions, thoughts and passions that it was a part of our beings.'<sup>11</sup> No wonder that Nehru managed to wriggle out of all commitments and political situations that led him to negotiations with Pakistan over Kashmir.

If Kashmir was an obsession for Nehru, so was it for Pakistan, and continues to be with no lessening of emotional intensity. Etymologically, the name Pakistan is derived from the initials of the regions from which Pakistan was to be created: P for the Punjab, A for Afghanistan (Northwest

Frontier Province), K for Kashmir, S for Sindh, and Tan for the ending of Baluchistan. Naively, however, the Muslim League leaders took it for granted that Kashmir would automatically accede to Pakistan, rather than be brought into the New State through negotiations and trade-off over other princely states with the Congress.

To a very large extent the Kashmir problem was aggravated by the Boundary Commission's British Chairman, Sir Cyril Radcliffe, who did a remarkably poor job in drawing the boundary lines between the Indian and Pakistan territories. Rightly, an Indian scholar has described the Radcliffe Award as 'self-contradictory'. Without any justification, Radcliffe awarded to India the district of Gurdaspur, which had actually been assigned to Pakistan by the Indian Independence Act of March, 1947. The transfer of this sliver of land made Indian movement of troops to Kashmir possible, and laid the groundwork for Kashmir's ruler to accede his state to India.

The manner and the style in which Lord Louis Mountbatten, the last British Viceroy of India, transferred power to India and Pakistan in August 1947, was very nearly irresponsible. The law mandated the transfer of power by March 1948; by completing his assignment eight months before the dead-line, he avoided the settlement of territorial and political problems associated with transfer of power to two states, and in fact, spawned many of the new interstate problems which poisoned relations between India and Pakistan at the start. Kashmir was also the legacy of Mountbatten's thoughtless haste, which ignited the war of 1947-8 in the state between India and Pakistan. Instead of promoting reconciliation between the two fraternal states, the war generated mutual suspicions, animosity and narrow nationalism.

At the time of partition, of 584 princely states scattered all over India, the overwhelming majority had Hindu populations and Hindu rulers; only a half dozen were Muslim. The general assumption was that the Hindu states would join India, and the Muslim states, Pakistan. Nearly all the states joined either one country or the other. However, the rulers of Junagarh, Hyderabad (in the South), and Kashmir (in the north) decided to join neither country. On 15 August 1947, at the dawn of independence, they became technically independent. One month later, Junagarh's Muslim ruler, with a predominantly Hindu population, joined Pakistan. Unwisely, Pakistan accepted his decision; India challenged it; thereupon the Indian Army entered the state and assured the Hindu population that they had the right to decide to which country they wanted to belong. Understandably, they voted in a plebiscite for India.

Hyderabad's Muslim ruler, against the wishes of his Hindu popula-

tion, decided to join neither India nor Pakistan, but attempted to enter into special treaty relations with India in order to retain a fair measure of independence for his state. India demanded that the state should accede to India unconditionally, and that subsequently a plebiscite could be held to ascertain the wishes of the population. The Indian Army forced its way into the state in September 1948, and Hyderabad became part of India.

The Hindu ruler of Kashmir, whose population was 85 per cent Muslim, decided to join India. Pakistan refused to recognise the ruler's decision to decide the fate of Kashmiri Muslims. Consequently, war broke out between India and Pakistan. India brought the issue before the United Nations, where a cease-fire in Kashmir was arranged in July 1949, and a plebiscite was provided in the Security Council resolution of 5 January 1949. India remained committed to holding a plebiscite to determine the preference of the Kashmiri population for India or Pakistan, until 1956 when Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru publically reneged on his solemn commitment for a plebiscite. In a series of statements and press conferences, Nehru offered a forceful defence of his new policy, observing that Pakistan had committed 'aggression' in Kashmir and that 'circumstances had changed', including US military aid to Pakistan, and her membership in SEATO, and the Baghdad Pact, and the incremental integration of Kashmir into the Indian union.<sup>12</sup> Also, he forcefully implied that a change in the status quo in Kashmir would adversely affect the status of Muslims in India.

Despite the two and a half wars of 1947–8, 1956 and 1971, India managed successfully to retain control over Kashmir in an attempt to convince Pakistan that it was beyond her military capability to wrest Kashmir from India. However, since 1989 the Muslim inhabitants of the Kashmir Valley have risen massively against the continued Indian occupation of Kashmir, demanding the right to vote for India or Pakistan. Barbara Crossette, the *New York Times*' special correspondent, in her dispatches from Kashmir in 1991, painted a gruesome picture of the violent confrontation between the Fourth Rajputana Rifles of the Indian expeditionary force, and the Kashmiris, especially women, who have 'moved to the forefront of demonstrations and also into guerilla conclaves.'<sup>13</sup> Crossette suggests that India is fighting a 'war against an independence movement it can no longer contain except by force'.<sup>14</sup>

India indeed needs to reconsider her policy in Kashmir. If Kashmir was Nehru's obsession until his death in 1964, it need not be an obsession for India in the 1990s; its equitable settlement would usher in an era of amity between the two fraternal states. That development should amount to something for both countries!

## NON-ALIGNMENT AS FOREIGN POLICY

This theory too owes its origin to Nehru's creative thinking in foreign policy. Two factors seem to have been catalytic in the evolution of the policy of non-alignment: (1) his conviction, again derived from Marxism-Leninism, that capitalism is the mother of imperialism; and (2) the historical experience of the All-India National Congress, and Nehru's exposure to the Soviet Union in the late 1920s. Nehru has asserted that the National Congress began to develop India's foreign policy in 1927, when Nehru returned from an extensive tour of the Soviet Union and western Europe. At the International Congress against imperialism at Brussels, he realised 'how the rising imperialism of the United States, with its tremendous resources and its immunity from outside attack, is gradually taking a stranglehold of Central and South America', and then concluded that 'the great problem of the near future will be American imperialism, even more than British imperialism, which appears to have had its day and is crumbling fast, or it may be, that the two will unite together in an endeavor to create a powerful Anglo-Saxon block to dominate the world'.<sup>15</sup>

Soviet imperial expansion, especially in Central Asia, did not escape Nehru's attention, but the Marxist theory that modern imperialism is the product of capitalism offered Nehru a satisfying and a neat theoretical formulation which explained the worldwide phenomenon of imperialism. In 1955, when the non-aligned movement was launched at the Bandung Conference in Indonesia, the movement was most vigorously supported by the Soviet Union; and of course China, despite its alliance of 1950 with the Soviet Union, participated in the Conference, and so did Pakistan.

Specifically for India, the policy of non-alignment meant four principles: (1) non-membership of any military alliance, especially with Communist and Western countries; (2) act according to your best judgement in light of India's national interest; (3) retain bilateral friendly relations with all states, belonging to military blocs or not; (4) seek military assistance from the United States when in need of military help, as in 1962 in war with China, or from the Soviet Union, as in 1971 when India planned a war of intervention to establish Bangladesh; but offer no military bases to any foreign power.

However, in 1954, when Pakistan was about to join the US sponsored defence system, Nehru strongly protested to Pakistan, and made some revealing arguments about Pakistan's new allied relationship. He called 'an expansion of Pakistan's war resources' an unfriendly act to India, and 'not compatible with true independence'. Nehru described the US aid as

endangering 'the freedom of Asian countries and brings in the intervention of a foreign power in Asia'.<sup>16</sup> Also, he thought it was a kind of intervention in Indo-Pakistani problems. Finally, an overkill of diplomatic rhetoric: Nehru described US aid to Pakistan 'as a step toward war, even world war'.<sup>17</sup> Referring to Pakistan's participation in SEATO and the Baghdad Pact, Nehru stated that both pacts 'tend to encircle us',<sup>18</sup> implying that the United States's imperialism was designed against India rather than the Communist major powers. Consequently, he called off negotiations with Pakistan on the arrangement for a plebiscite in Kashmir, and then stated in a public meeting on 13 April 1956 that India would consider partition of Kashmir along the cease-fire line with minor adjustments.<sup>19</sup>

## THE AMERICAN FACTOR IN PAKISTAN'S FOREIGN AND SECURITY POLICY

In Pakistan, it was generally believed that only after the India-Pakistan crisis of 1951, when the two countries almost went to war against each other, did Pakistan become seriously interested in joining an allied relationship with the United States.<sup>20</sup> Jinnah and his Prime Minister Liaquat Ali Khan made public statements that Pakistan planned to follow a non-aligned foreign policy, and to maintain friendly relations with all states, especially the neighbours.

However, only two weeks after the Quaid-i-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah assumed his office of Governor General of the newly established Pakistan on 14 August 1947, he sent a secret envoy, Mir Laik Ali, to Washington. Mir Laik Ali presented to the State Department a memorandum, requesting a loan of over \$2 billion: (1) Army – \$170,000,000 for a regular army of 100,000 consisting of 1 armoured division and 5 infantry divisions; (2) Air Force – \$75,000,000 for 12 fighter squadrons, 4 fighter reconnaissance squadrons, 3 bomber squadrons, and 4 training wings; (3) Navy – \$60,000,000 for 4 light cruisers, 16 destroyers, 4 corvettes, 12 coast guard gunboats, and 3 submarines.<sup>21</sup> Mir Laik Ali's memorandum justified an additional loan of \$700 million for Pakistan's economic development, and underlined the thesis that Pakistan 'faced a Soviet threat on her northern frontier'.

Evidently, the anti-Communist line was adopted in order to fit a request of this magnitude in the Cold War context of Soviet-American confrontation. This request was turned down, because the United States was not quite prepared to edge the British out of South Asia, and had not developed a comprehensive strategy for the containment of Communist power in Asia.

Between 1947 and 1953 it took a Democratic and a Republican administration to conduct four secret strategy confabulations at the Pentagon with Britain to finally include Pakistan in the US defence system.

Prime Minister Liaquat Ali Khan (14 August 1947 – 16 October 1951) undertook some actions which offended the Soviet Union and reflected his partiality towards the United States. Stalin's government sent Liaquat a formal letter of invitation to make a state visit to the Soviet Union, which he accepted on 8 June 1949. A cultured man, Liaquat breached the diplomatic protocol in exploiting Stalin's invitation in order to wangle an invitation from President Harry S. Truman on 6 December 1949. Causing an affront to the dignity of the Soviet Union, Liaquat never visited the USSR. Instead, he visited the United States and Canada from 3 to 30 May, 1950.

The secret Pentagon confabulations (1947, 1950, 1952 and 1954) recognised Pakistan's strategic significance: (1) as a state closer to Soviet Central Asia; (2) as a potential 'leader' in the Islamic world; (3) as a society generally reflecting an anti-Communist orientation; (4) as having a friendly attitude (though ineptly reflected by Liaquat's conduct) towards the West, compared with Nehru's antagonistic behaviour, which viewed US foreign policy as a Marxist example of capitalism giving birth to imperialism.

American military aid to Pakistan, according to Indian analysts, caused the Pakistani leaders to magnify 'Hindu imperialism', and to interject distortions in Pakistan's foreign policy: (1) unrealistic aspirations directed against India; (2) inadequate appreciation for the US policy of no-war between India and Pakistan; (3) diversion of Pakistan's meagre economic resources to burgeoning military expenditures; (4) initial alienation from the Afro-Asian countries, and lessening of influence in the Middle East; (5) cultivation of an 'unrealistic' view of India as the 'implacable enemy' which provoked Nehru to become uncompromising on Kashmir; (6) incurring of unnecessary Soviet hostility to legitimate Pakistani security interests; and finally, (7) illusory US commitments to Pakistan's security on occasions of conflict with India.<sup>22</sup>

## PAKISTAN'S TWO-NATION THEORY

Pakistan's two-nation theory was an anathema to Mahatma Gandhi, Nehru, the Indian National Congress, and the general Indian public. However, it is often overlooked that some Hindu leaders of Congress accepted its validity and supported it, while all Islam-oriented religious-political parties before 1947 uniformly rejected the two-nation theory, and



opposed the creation of Pakistan. It is a strange twist of history that the Pakistan national movement spawned an 'alliance' between the Muslim religio-political parties and the National Congress, and they jointly struggled against the All-India Muslim League, a modernist party of conservative landowners, business and urban entrepreneurial professional classes, which had mobilised the Muslim masses, invoking the prospects of better economic life in the Islamic milieu of Pakistan.

Despite the bitter struggle, the Congress and the League shared modernist orientation, a commitment to bourgeois parliamentary democracy, land reforms, private enterprise with a large publicly-owned sector of capital industry. However, the Muslim League emphasised the constitutional safeguards for provincial autonomy, a guaranteed Muslim share in the federal government in order to eliminate the possibility of what pejoratively came to be called 'the internal Hindu imperialism'. When these conditions had the prospect of fulfilment in a constitutional formula, such as the Cabinet Mission Plan of 1946, which preserved the territorial unity of India, Jinnah and the League accepted it. A detached review of the Congress's policy indicated that it wanted the Muslims to join the Indian Union unconditionally, and then settle Hindu-Muslim issues, after the British departure from India. To the Muslims, especially the League, this sounded like a political entrapment for domination. The sabotage of the Cabinet Mission Plan by Nehru was an act lacking in farsightedness, and India paid a heavy price for it.

Actually, the two-nation theory is based upon the Indian historical experience. Throughout this experience a four-stage process is visible: (i) since the dawn of Indian history foreign races, like the Aryans, Kushanas, White Huns, Persians and Greeks have invaded India; (ii) foreign and indigenous races were amalgamated; (iii) a synthesis of cultures took place, when the alien religious and other cultural values were integrated into the native Indian culture, bringing into existence Hindu culture and religion; and (iv) finally, an assimilative process took hold, eliminating any trace of foreign cultural intrusion, and stamping in India what came to be known as 'Indian civilisation'. Muslims entered the Indus Valley (today's Pakistan) in 710 and established their rule in most of India until the nineteenth century. The foreign-born and native converts created the 'Muslim nation', which failed to be assimilated culturally and religiously into the grand Indian cultural tradition. Had the Muslims been assimilated into India, there would have been no need or yearning for the creation of Pakistan in the 1940s.<sup>23</sup>

Nehru, from his Marxist, and Mahatma Gandhi, from his Hindu-nationalist perspective, rejected this thesis. Mahatma Gandhi believed that

'every Muslim is merely a Hindu who has accepted Islam and every Muslim will have a Hindu name if he goes back far enough in his family history'.<sup>24</sup> Analogously, would it be a fair deduction to say that every Egyptian has historically a Pharaonic name, and that he is not an Arabised Muslim? However, among some Indian intellectuals and sober historians there has been a marked tendency to reappraise the causes of the partition of India in 1947. Leading Indian historians, including K. M. Munshi, R. C. Majumdar and A. D. Pusalkar, under the auspices of Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, completed a multivolume history of the Indian culture and people. Discussing the Muslim period they state that 'unlike the previous invaders, the Muslims did not merge themselves with the Hindus, and thus for the first time the population of India was divided into two separate units with marked distinctions. This was the historic beginning of the Hindu-Muslim problem that led after more than six hundred years to the creation of Pakistan'.<sup>25</sup>

However, the Muslim League articulated the two-nation theory in 1930, when the poet-philosopher, Dr Muhammad Iqbal, in his presidential address to the annual session of the Muslim League, proposed that 'the Punjab, North-West Frontier, Sindh and Baluchistan [be] amalgamated in a single state' for 'self-government' within or without 'the British Empire'. Notionally, the State of Pakistan was thus born; only in 1940 was the Pakistan Resolution adopted, but the Muslim League abandoned its demand in 1946, when it accepted the Cabinet Mission Plan. As a last resort, Pakistan was thus created in 1947.

### **Muslim Opponents of Two-Nation Theory**

Remarkably though, in addition to the All-India National Congress, all major Muslim religio-political organisations in India remained steadfastly opposed to the creation of Pakistan. Prominent among them were: (1) Dar al-Ulum Deoband; (2) Jamiat ulama-i Hind; (3) Majlis-i Ahrar; (4) the Khaksar Movement, whose members on two separate occasions attempted to assassinate Muhammad Ali Jinnah, the founder of Pakistan; and (5) Jama't-i Islami of Sayyid Abul Ala Maududi.

The first three religious organisations can be truly called secular since secularism of the Congress was their political philosophy: government must remain neutral and must guarantee separation between 'religion' and state. Rightly, they believed that Pakistan would not solve the problems of Indian Muslims after the partition; they would be exposed to the Hindus' distrust and suspected of disloyalty to India. Not all Muslims would be able to migrate to Pakistan, and the remaining minority would have no

leverage over the Hindu majority and Pakistan would be unable to protect them since it would be a smaller and a weaker state. Moreover, India would nurse a revengeful urge to dominate Pakistan. The Khaksar Movement had practically all the characteristics of a fascist movement, and Islamic-Indian unity remained its vaguely defined message.

The intellectual and spiritual mentor of the first three organisations was Abul Kalam Azad, a long-time President of the Congress, a scholar of Islam and a known commentator of the Qur'an. As a young man, Azad had been deeply influenced by the rise of secular and non-sectarian Arab nationalism after the First World War. This secular orientation committed Azad to the ideal of a unified Hindu-Muslim nation. In order to legitimise this secular nationalist policy, Azad pointed to the constitution of Medina (AD 622). Actually, it was a treaty which the Prophet Muhammad concluded with the non-believers, the Jews, the Ansars (allies), and the Muslim Muhajireen (the immigrants), who followed him to Medina. The preamble of the treaty stated: *Bism Allah al-rahman al-rahim. Hadha Kitab min Muhammad al-Nabiy bayn al-muminin wa-almuslimin min Quraysh wa-yathrib wa-man tab'hum falhaq bham wa-jahad ma'ham al'naham ummat wahidat min dun al-nas*.<sup>26</sup> 'In the name of God the Compassionate, the Merciful. This is a document from Muhammad the Prophet [governing the relations] between the believers and Muslims of Quraysh and Yathribh [Medina], and those who followed them and joined them and labored with them. They are one community to the exclusion of all men'.<sup>27</sup>

Azad's interpretation fitted the political mix of India: if Muslims and non-Muslims could be one community through an alliance in 622, why couldn't this situation be repeated in India between the Hindus and the Muslims for a territorially united India? So passionately was this view upheld by his followers that a Majlis-i Ahrar's poet coined a pejorative doggerel for Jinnah: *Yeh Quid-i Azam hah, kah kafir-i Azam* ('Is this the Great Leader or the Great Infidel?').

Jama't-i Islami's opposition was both to two-nation and to one-nation theories; it stood only for an undivided India. In his extensive studies of Indian politics and of Muslims' political orientations and struggle for power, Maududi offered six fundamental reasons for the Jama't-i Islami's opposition to the creation of Pakistan:

- (1) There was no qualitative difference between the League's Muslim nationalism and the Congress's Indian nationalism. To Maududi the concept of nationalism was unIslamic and was consequently an anathema. Islam was a universal creed, transcending ethnic, linguis-

tic, cultural and geographic boundaries. The national orientations of the League and the Congress were intolerably confining and militated against the Islamic philosophy.

- (2) Jinnah and the League, and their followers, were secular, despite their lip-service to Islam; and were thus unacceptable to 'true Muslims'.
- (3) Secular Muslims would not create an Islamic state; only 'true Muslims' could.
- (4) Jama't-i Islami was *hizb Allah*, the Party of God, espousing neither the League nor the Congress brand of nationalism. It was committed to converting the whole of Hindu India to Islam, and making Bharat (historical India) a *Dar-al Islam*, land of Islam.
- (5) The Pakistan national movement, Maududi reasoned, would 'jail' Islam in a limited territory.
- (6) Territorial nationalism of any variety would kill the universal spirit of Islam. Islam was designed to create a 'nationality of believers'.<sup>28</sup>

When Pakistan came into existence the Jama't-i Islami became exceptionally unpopular. During the Kashmir War (1947–8), Maududi, in opposition to the Liaquat Government's contention, described Pakistan's participation a 'non-jihad', an unIslamic war fought for secular reasons. Promptly, the Pakistan government confined him to jail; this pattern of antagonistic relations between Maududi and the successive Pakistani governments remained intact until Maududi's death in 1979.

### **Hindu Supporters of the Two-Nation Theory**

Some prominent Hindu leaders also supported the Muslim League's two-nation theory. During the 1940s their views began to have some impact on the Congress's leadership. Notable among them were: (1) Lala Lajpat Rai in the Punjab – a one-time president of the Congress; (2) V. D. Savarkar, president of an influential Hindu Party, the Hindu Maha Sabha; (3) B. R. Ambedkar, the law minister in Nehru's cabinet, and the crafter of the Indian Constitution; (4) Rajagopalachari, an eminent Congress leader and the first Governor-General of India after Lord Mountbatten's departure; and (5) Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, a powerful leader of the Congress from Gujrat and Deputy Prime Minister of Nehru after independence.

Lala Lajpat Rai proposed the partition of India in 1924, six years before Iqbal's presidential address to the Muslim League. 'Under my scheme', he

stated, 'the Muslims will have four Muslim states: (1) Pathan Province or the Northwest Frontier; (2) Western Punjab; (3) Sind; (4) Eastern Bengal....It means a clear partition of India into a Muslim India and non-Muslim India.'<sup>29</sup> In referring to the historical Hindu-Muslim confrontation, Savarkar stated: 'It is safer to diagnose and treat deep-seated disease than to ignore it. Let us bravely face unpleasant facts as they are; India cannot be assumed today to be a unitarian and homogeneous nation, but on the contrary there are two nations in the main, the Hindus and Muslims in India.'<sup>30</sup>

Ambedkar, in his phenomenally analytical study of the prospects for Pakistan: *Pakistan or the Partition of India* (1946) asserted that 'there was no common cycle of participation [between Hindus and Muslims] for a common achievement'. In fact, the heroes of the Muslims were the foes of the Hindus. The factors that divided the two peoples were far more significant than those that bound them together. He thus allowed the League's claim to a separate nationhood for the Muslims.<sup>31</sup>

Rajagopalachari's admission of the two-nation theory was of seismic proportion inasmuch as he persuaded the Madras (Tamil Nadu) Legislature Congress Party to pass a resolution, in April 1942, which stated: 'to sacrifice the chances of the formation of a National Government at this grave crisis for the doubtful advantage of maintaining a controversy over the unity of India is a most unwise policy and that it has become necessary to choose the lesser evil and acknowledge the Muslim League's claim for separation'.

When the Congress high command, including Nehru and informally Mahatma Gandhi, reprimanded him for passing a resolution without consulting his colleagues, Rajagopalachari resigned from the working committee of the Congress. Last, but not least, one of the most powerful leaders of the Congress, Patel, accepted the Muslims' demand for Pakistan. Abul Kalam Azad, the traditional alim (scholar) of Islam, and a famous commentator of the Qur'an, who formulated the one-nation theory to justify Indian territorial and national unity, was stunned when he first discovered that his Hindu colleague had come to accept the Muslims' Pakistan. Patel said, Azad has recorded, 'that like it or not, there were two nations in India'.<sup>32</sup> Patel also influenced Mahatma Gandhi to accept Pakistan.

When, in 1971, Bangladesh was established by East Pakistanis, Indian leaders, journalists and academicians most gleefully pronounced that the Muslim League's two-nation theory had died its natural death. In other words, it was not only the military, but also the ideological triumph of India over Pakistan.

## COLLAPSE OF PAKISTAN: DISMAL ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL PROSPECTS

This 'theory', if at all it can be called a theory, was most widely accepted in India and Pakistan between 1947 and 1955. Foreign observers, including British administrators and British and American journalists, conspicuously subscribed to this view.

Among the Pakistanis, Chaudhri Muhammad Ali, who was Jinnah's and Liaquat's adviser in the 1940s, and himself became the prime minister of Pakistan in 1955, has explained the Indian expectation of Pakistan's collapse.

- (1) In May 1947, Mountbatten took the decision, after consulting with the Congress leaders, that power would be transferred to India as the successor state, and to Pakistan as a seceding state, within two months, that is, August 1947, instead of 1 June 1948, the original date for the withdrawal of British power from India.
- (2) India would join the British Commonwealth of nations, and Mountbatten be the Governor-General to both the dominions. India accepted Mountbatten as the Governor-General, but Jinnah rejected it. Consequently, the advantages of this hurried transfer of power accrued 'wholly to the Indian union, and disadvantages to Pakistan'.
- (3) The demand for Pashtunistan was conceived by Mahatma Gandhi, instead of Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan, because it was his 'aim to detach the Northwest Frontier Province from Pakistan'. Chaudhri Muhammad Ali added that 'later when Congress plans [of accession] with regard to the State of Jammu and Kashmir materialized, it would be possible to bring the Northwest Frontier Province, which was contiguous with Kashmir, back into the Indian union'.
- (4) The Radcliffe Award consistently lopped off a number of contiguous Muslim-majority areas from the Punjab and gave them to India, and not a single non-Muslim-majority area was taken from India and given to Pakistan. Evidently, the strategy was to make Pakistan as small as possible, and economically non-viable. The following Muslim areas were given to India: (1) in Gurdaspur district two contiguous Muslim-majority *tehsils* (sub-districts); (2) in Amritsar one *tehsil* of Ajnala; (3) in Jullunder two *tehsils*; (4) in Ferozepore

two *tehsils*. All of these Muslim-majority areas were contiguous to West Punjab in Pakistan.

- (5) In addition to the land grab, India created numerous administrative, fiscal, asset distribution, armed forces, and canal waters problems immediately upon the creation of Pakistan. These difficulties were being created because the Indian leaders subscribed to the view that Pakistan was not a viable state – politically, economically, geographically, or militarily. In light of this Indian attitude, Chaudhri Muhammad Ali delivered his final verdict: ‘The leaders of India accepted partition in the hope of undoing it soon and establishing their hegemony over the whole subcontinent.’<sup>33</sup>

A Pakistani scholar-diplomat, S. M. Burke, has stated a view widely held in Pakistan: ‘This reluctance on the part of the Indian leadership to forget the past, accept Pakistan as a permanent fact, and base their policies on that reality, has been a serious psychological hindrance to the reconciliation of the two sister countries.’<sup>34</sup>

Within India, negative psychological factors were amply demonstrated. In August 1953, at least five Indian daily newspapers reported several public meetings which were held in India on the theme of the territorial unity of India. The *Parbhat* stated in its editorial that ‘Pakistani leaders are well aware of the fact that the majority of the Indian people do not accept the partition of 1947 and will come out in the open to do away with it at the first opportunity’.<sup>35</sup> To those Indian positions may be added the judgments of foreign observers. In 1955 Eustace Seligman, Chairman of the Board of the American Foreign Policy Association, concluded that the real reason why India objected to the grant of military aid to Pakistan, and a plebiscite in Kashmir, which she knew would favour accession to Pakistan, was that they would both ‘create further obstacles to the ultimate unification of Muslim and Hindu India’.<sup>36</sup> Alastair Lamb put his finger on the right psychological spot of the political dilemma: ‘The argument between the *one-nation* and *two-nation* theories is really concerned with the problem whether Pakistan has a right to exist at all.’<sup>37</sup>

Finally, one might add that the Indian perspectives on the Pakistani state have not remained fixed. They changed very substantially after the wars of 1965 and 1971. In the 1990s one wonders if the reunification of Pakistan and Bangladesh with India has any great significance for the Indian leadership; unless irresistible temptations come their way by the inept leaders of the Muslim states.

## II

At the Villanova University's international seminar, a multi-dimensional analysis of India-Pakistan relations was conducted by fifteen American, Soviet, Pakistani, and Indian scholars. Moreover, the relations between these two states were subjected to a fairly minute scrutiny, and the possibilities of two distinct and autonomous regional cooperations – one among the South Asian states, and the second among the Southwest Asian – were explored. Also, an attempt was made to assess the imperatives of the domestic determinants of Indian and Pakistani foreign policies, especially towards each other.

## SUPERPOWERS' RELATIONS WITH INDIA AND PAKISTAN

Six well-known American, Soviet and Indian scholars – Thomas Perry Thornton, Vyacheslav Ya. Belokrenitsky, Melvin Goodman, Alvin Z. Rubinstein, Raju G. C. Thomas and Kail C. Ellis – established the global perspectives for the conduct of the foreign policies of South Asian states, and their mutual interaction.

A former aide in the US National Security Council of the Carter Administration, and currently Professor of International Relations, specialising on South Asian states, Thomas Perry Thornton stated forthrightly that US strategic interests in South Asia are of a low order, challenged only by Central Africa for last place in the list of American concerns.<sup>7</sup> Several factors accounted for this low priority for South Asia: (1) India and Pakistan had generally cancelled each other out as actors on the Asian scene; (2) in the Asian security equation, Sino-Soviet relations were the primary factors, 'with Japan as a factor of growing importance'; (3) Pakistan preferred to be thought of as a Southwest Asian state with the world of Islam as its 'natural' habitat, while Sri Lanka cast 'longing eyes towards Southeast Asia'; (4) consequently, the US State Department had refused to create a separate Bureau for South Asia, preferring to keep it within the Bureau of Near East and South Asian affairs; while the Defense Department had bifurcated South Asia, with Pakistan included in the area of the Central Command, and the other states lumped together within the purview of the Commander-in-Chief of the Pacific region.

Clearly, this was a picture of a subordinate sub-system, despite the Indian aspirations and claims to a global diplomatic role. However, Thornton argued that, while the United States had no vital strategic interest in South Asia, with the exception of her economic interests in the



Gulf, where Pakistan could play a meaningful role, he believed that, in the Soviet Union's geostrategic considerations, India had come to play an important political role. Evidently, both superpowers conceded to India an acceptable security managerial role in South Asia. However, despite the Soviet military withdrawal from Afghanistan, the Soviet Union had remained involved in support of the Kabul regime.

Thornton foresaw a mini rivalry in the Indian Ocean between the American and Indian Navies. India was likely to continue its political pressure on the US presence around the naval base of Diego Garcia, and its Navy might even become threatening if US forces operated 'in support of objectives that the Indians oppose (e.g. bringing aid to a beleaguered Israel)'.

Finally, Thornton argued quite forcefully that 'the bilateral, regional, transregional and global considerations taken together yield a US strategic interest in South Asia that has much less [American] support than it had at the start of the past decade'. The level of US interest generated in 1979 by the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan was abnormally high; rightly Thornton argued that it 'cannot be taken as a baseline for projecting the future'.

An eminent Soviet scholar, and Head of the Middle East Department of the Institute of Oriental Studies in Moscow, Vyacheslav Ya. Belokrenitsky discussed Soviet relations with India strictly within the framework of the Cold War from 1947 to Mikhail Gorbachev's perestroika. Had it not been for Pakistan's cosying up to the United States in the network of SEATO and CENTO alliances, Belokrenitsky implied, the Soviet-Indian and Soviet-Pakistani relations would have been qualitatively different from what they became.

Dividing Soviet-Indian relations into two categories, political and economic, Belokrenitsky examined them going through three distinct stages, what he called their peaks and valleys. However, it must be pointed out that these two distinct categories were established for analytical purposes only – the economic relations simply reflected the depth of political relations between the two states. Economic considerations did not lead to the establishment of the strategic 'partnership' between India and the Soviet Union from which India has derived disproportionately high economic advantages. 'The notion of reliability', according to an American analyst, 'is central in their perception of their relationship'.<sup>38</sup> In fact, India has benefited economically out of all proportion to the political advantage which the Soviet Union might have derived from India. The Soviet gains in enlisting Indian participation as a counterweight to China, in order to

establish an Asian balance of power, were mostly notional and intangible, whereas Indian economic gains were substantial and tangible.

How tangible were these economic gains for India? An Indian testimony on the subject is in order. In October 1982 *India Today* stated: 'Soviet-Indian projects now provide 35 per cent of Indian steel, 60 per cent of domestic oil production, roughly half of the country's oil refining capacity, 20 per cent of the total electricity generated, and a projected 40 per cent of domestic coal production ... over 50 industrial plants across the country have been set up with Soviet collaboration. A further 30 projects are now under implementation with Soviet help ... .' Finally, *India Today's* political assessment of Soviet economic aid to India: 'This degree of involvement by one country in developing the economy of the world's tenth largest industrial power is probably without parallel as precedent.' Indeed! One has to concur with this evaluation.

Belokrenitsky saw three peaks in Soviet-Indian relations: (1) Jawaharlal Nehru's visit to the Soviet Union in 1955; (2) the Soviet-Indian Friendship Treaty of August 1971, which enabled India to receive substantial military aid from the Soviet Union, and her diplomatic support at the United Nations in order to fight a successful war against Pakistan, bringing into existence Bangladesh in former East Pakistan; (3) Mikhail Gorbachev's visit to India, and Rajiv Gandhi's visit to the Soviet Union in 1986-8. At the end of the third peak, Belokrenitsky suggested that the fourth period of bilateral relations was underlined by stability, but that the upward trend had slowed down. The three peaks have been rightly explained in terms of a Sino-Soviet-US triangle, and Pakistan's role in their conflictual diplomacy.

Finally, a contrast between the Soviet and American interests in South Asia is in order. As Thornton pointed out, the United States did not have a fundamental strategic interest in South Asia. US interest in the region has been sporadic, and is occasioned by a threat or challenge to her interests. American military aid to Pakistan had been turned on and off periodically in response to crisis or provocation caused by either the Soviet Union or China, especially before 1971-2. The Soviet approach to the region clearly reflected her recognition of the geostrategic significance of South Asia, especially in view of its strained relations with its Asian rival, China. Geography, and security requirements, combined to create a sense of a need to seek Soviet influence in South Asia, and to preserve the element of reliability in its relations with India. The United States, on the other hand, had earned a reputation in Pakistan for *inconstancy* and *unreliability*; these twin perceptions were very much the product of US reactive foreign policy towards South Asia.

A well-known Soviet foreign policy specialist at the US National Defense University, Melvin Goodman, presented a three-dimensional analysis dealing with: (a) the Gulf and Southwest Asian states, their interaction with the Soviet Union and the United States, and their impact on South Asia; (b) Soviet–Chinese–Indian triangular relations and their repercussions for the security of Pakistan; and finally, (c) the United States' rapprochement with the Soviet Union, and its consequences for India and Pakistan. This tripartite analysis revolved around the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, and subsequent Soviet withdrawal on schedule in February 1989. The Soviet withdrawal had a salutary impact on the Soviet Union's bilateral relations with Saudi Arabia (which reestablished diplomatic relations with Moscow in September 1990, after their prolonged suspension, beginning in 1938), Iran, the United States, and China.

In addition to this three-dimensional analysis, Goodman devoted substantial space to conclusions and to the outlook for possible future developments in South Asia. Truly, some of his prognostications, based primarily upon Gorbachev's diplomatic initiatives, are intriguing. After improving relations with the United States, Goodman believed that the Soviet Union 'will now turn its attention to the Middle East and South Asia', where there has been a proliferation of sophisticated weapons. In the Middle East, Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze proposed in 1989 the establishment of a 'military risk-reduction center', and a 'nuclear-free and chemical-free zone'; just about this time, India announced that it had fired its first medium-range ballistic missile, while Pakistan held its 'own widely publicized tests of tactical missiles with ranges short of 200 miles'. However, the Soviets, for the first time, had begun to 'question their leasing of a nuclear submarine to India', fearing the 'possibility of a naval race in the Indian Ocean between India and Pakistan'.

Almost dramatic cooperation of the Soviet Union with the United States 'in the wake of the Iraqi invasion' indicated that the Soviet Union would curtail its commitments in Southwest Asia, and would prefer to find regional solutions to regional problems in collaboration with the United States, and the United Nations. However, Goodman asserted that Soviet–Pakistan relations remained problematic. Both countries continued to provide assistance to opposing factions in Afghanistan. Also, there was deep mistrust toward the Soviet Union in Pakistan's ruling circles, and the military. Pakistan was unlikely to improve relations with the USSR if that process 'would compromise its diplomatic and military dependence on China and the United States'. If the separatist activity on the part of the Muslims in Soviet Central Asia became threatening to Moscow it would also 'deter improved bilateral relations between the USSR and Pakistan'.

Goodman rightly believed that India and the Soviet Union needed each other. 'India is important to the USSR for containing the United States and China in South Asia ... India, on the other hand, needs the Soviet Union in order to contain China and Pakistan and to insulate the region from US involvement.' This mutual need might yet be diluted with Gorbachev's 'new political thinking', which might lead to truly improved relations with China. Finally, Goodman foresaw a possible new development: 'As long as Moscow continues to improve its relations with the United States and China, it will become far more difficult for such regional actors as India and Pakistan to manipulate the actions of the superpowers for regional purposes.' In such an eventuality, one might add that the balance would decisively tilt in India's favour, who has become self-reliant in most major sophisticated weapons.

An eminent scholar of Soviet foreign policy, who is well-known in the academic and US Government circles for his books and numerous articles, Alvin Z. Rubinstein analysed Soviet prospects in Afghanistan, a country of prime importance to the future security of Pakistan. Rubinstein's central thesis about Soviet 'presence' in Afghanistan included (1) Gorbachev's willingness to expend almost \$3 billion worth of economic and military resources annually to Afghanistan, despite the fact that the Soviet economy was currently in shambles; (2) Najibullah's ability in Kabul to survive and to control the key cities, while repelling the Mujahideen's efforts to conquer Kabul. Consequently, he was inclined to the view that Moscow's policy towards Kabul was the classic Leninist tactic of one step forward, two steps backward.

Despite Soviet military 'defeat' at the Mujahideen's hands, Rubinstein maintained that three currently stable factors spawned the Soviets' persistent involvement in Afghanistan; (1) geographic contiguity; (2) Afghanistan's economic dependence on the Soviet Union; and (3) the ephemerality of the United States' interest in South Asia in general and in Afghanistan in particular. Parenthetically, it may be pointed out that there seems to be an agreement on the third point between Rubinstein, Goodman and Thornton.

In so far as the eventual settlement in Afghanistan was concerned, Rubinstein presented six very plausible scenarios: (1) the possibility that the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA) would manage to hang on; (2) the emergence of a government of national reconciliation, that is an interim government based on an agreement between the PDPA and the non-Communist Mujahideen groups; (3) a political free-for-all in Kabul (what Rubinstein called political *buzkashi*) resulting in a dissolution of authority; (4) a moderate nationalist-Islamic coalition;

(5) confederation based on rule by the local military commanders; and finally (6) the triumph of a fundamentalist Islamic regime. He thoroughly examined each scenario and concluded that the first two would be the most acceptable to the Soviet Union, although the Soviets, he believed, would be able to manage their relations even with an Islamic fundamentalist government just as they had evolved cooperatively satisfactory relations with the Shiite Islamic Government of Iran. The compulsions of geography, security and economic interests would bring about a good neighbourly relationship.

Finally, Rubinstein assessed the implications for South Asia of the Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan. India, like the Soviet Union, would welcome a pro-Soviet government in Kabul, such a government would be cool toward Islamabad, and he believed 'this would suit Indian aims'. For Pakistan, he offered a wise suggestion: 'Better relations with the Soviet Union is in Pakistan's long-term security interest. The Pakistan-China connection may not be as reliable in a period when Sino-Soviet relations are on the mend.' Indeed, Pakistan in its own security interest must cultivate diplomatic flexibility in its relations, not only with the Soviet Union but also with India, in order to 'contribute to a relaxation of regional tensions'.

Raju G. C. Thomas, a respected Indian analyst of India's security policy, explored several themes and some of the new risks and opportunities that are available to India during the 1990s. He offered some thought-provoking explanations for the growth of Indian military power, India's accounting of the strategic military balance (both conventional and nuclear), and the likely effects of global and what he calls 'trans-regional politics' on India's defence strategies. Finally, he assessed the impact of disturbed domestic and economic conditions on the security of South Asia.

Thomas's explanations for the growth of Indian military power are realistic and credible. Rightly, he stated that 'India's military power has continued to grow steadily over the last two decades, while the percentage of the GNP allocated to defence over the last decade has remained about the same compared to earlier decades'. India had allocated 3.0 and 3.8 per cent of its GNP to defence in 1985 and 1987, when Pakistan had allocated 6.9 and 7.4 per cent. In contrast to India's military expenditure of \$10 per capita in 1988, Pakistan had spent \$36 per capita. Then what was the 'secret' of Indian defence expansion? The answer lay in the size and growth of the Indian economy, at an average rate of about 5 per cent of the GNP since 1979, and at almost 9 per cent in 1988. Despite a steady annual allocation of 3 to 4 per cent of the GNP since 1962, 'the absolute amounts allocated since 1979 are greater than the previous decades'.

For Pakistan, political lessons derived from these simple statistics were inescapable. Despite generous foreign military and economic aid, it could not continue to afford excessive defence allocations indefinitely without causing serious damage to its social fabric and comparatively small economic base.

During the 1990s, India was less likely to perceive Sino-Pakistan threat, while he asserted (and this author is in disagreement) that 'the Indo-Soviet quasi-alliance relationship appears to have eroded and dissipated with the end of the Cold War ...'. If the latter assessment was correct, then why has India only recently (March 1991) informed the United States about her intention to renew the Friendship Treaty of August 1971 with the Soviet Union? The other aspect of Thomas's analysis was right on target, that Sino-Indian relationships had improved, which might cause lessening of Sino-Pakistani cordiality. In this eventuality, Thomas predicted 'Pakistan's search for allies and military support may be increasingly concentrated in the Islamic Middle East.'

Last, but not least, Thomas tackled the issue of a nuclear race between India and Pakistan. He repeated his thesis, which he has stated fully elsewhere, that the nuclearisation of South Asia would be to Pakistan's advantage. He thus clinches his argument: 'A few Pakistani nuclear bombs capable of being launched against India causing unacceptable damage could render India's nuclear and conventional military superiority over Pakistan meaningless.' The other side of the proposition, which Thomas has ignored, is equally compelling: Can Pakistan afford to fight a cataclysmic war with nuclear weapons, no matter how sweet the prospects of a victory in Kashmir? No! Unexpectedly, this may eventuate a stable stalemate between the two neighbours, compelling them to negotiate to 'solution' the emotive problem of Kashmir, and other geostrategic issues in the Indian Ocean and in South Asia.

Kail C. Ellis has specialised on the politics of the Middle East and Pakistan. In his insightful analysis of Pakistan's recent foreign policy, he has developed an intriguing thesis – an alternating application of 'Islamic ideology and pragmatic realism'. This strategy has been applied, he believes, with 'some consistency'. The Islamic factor, according to Ellis, has created 'a certain ambivalence' in US–Pakistan relations because of 'Pakistan's identification with Arab and Islamic causes'. The imperatives of national survival compel Pakistan to 'seek security on the subcontinent, and support from the Muslim world'. Obviously, the policy of utilising the Islamic heritage is not immune to the collateral damage accruing from the politics of the Middle East and especially the Arab–Israeli conflict.

In analysing the Islamic factor, Ellis indicated that, from its inception in August 1947, Pakistan in fact formulated what he called 'a Muslim foreign policy'. This policy was not very helpful to Pakistan's security interest, and was then effectively abandoned in favour of an alliance with the United States in 1954. With the loss of East Pakistan in 1971, the Bhutto government 'capitalised on the public sentiment for a reaffirmation of Islam as a personal and national ideology'. Consequently, Pakistan's foreign policy started to emphasise 'the need for Muslim solidarity in the economic and political spheres', and the policy paid off in a relatively short period of time in the Gulf states.

Ellis argued that, with the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan, the emphasis shifted again to pragmatic realism. General Zia, who had toppled Bhutto in a coup, continued Bhutto's policy towards the Islamic state, but also firmed up relations with the United States, and received substantial military and economic aid. However, after 1979 there was no disharmony between the Arab states' policy objectives and that of Pakistan especially on the subject of Afghanistan.

In regard to the future direction of Pakistan's foreign policy, Ellis predicted that Pakistan 'could be called upon to play a larger role in the defence of the Gulf. ... Pakistan's sheer size and status as a non-Arab Muslim nation will continue to ensure its role as an important player in the region.' Should this come to pass, Pakistan's Islamic ideology and pragmatic realism would be in harmony once again.

## REGIONAL DISPUTES AND THEIR IMPACT ON FOREIGN POLICIES AND POWER PROJECTIONS

Mushahid Hussain, Robert Wirsing, Maya Chadda, Saleem M. M. Qureshi and Javid Iqbal offered insightful analyses of ethnic and religious conflicts within India and Pakistan and the extent to which they determine the foreign policies of these two competitive states.

A well-known journalist, and the former editor of *The Muslim*, a national daily newspaper of Pakistan, Mushahid Hussain, presented a *tour de horizon* of India's projection of power in South Asia and regional states' reactions to India's political and military outreach. He was keenly aware of the global realignments which we are reshaping the political maps of various regions in the world, but he asserted that, simultaneously, India had begun to establish its hegemony in South Asia. This was visible in the Indian military actions beginning with: (1) the 1986 Exercise Brasstacks, 'the biggest ever military manoeuvre', on the Indian borders

with Pakistan; (2) the 1987 military expedition into Sri Lanka; (3) the 1988 military intervention in the Maldives; (4) the 1989 'economic strangulation' of Nepal; and (5) the 1990 'positioning in Kashmir'.

In Mushahid Hussain's analysis, the two-nation theory cast its shadow on both sides of the India-Pakistan border: there was an irrepressible urge in India to project its power in the Indian Ocean and the land mass of South Asia, what Raju G. C. Thomas derisively describes as the Rodney Dangerfield syndrome of India – 'I am not respected'; and there was Pakistan's irresistible passion to assert its sovereign personality, which takes delight in India's failures, especially her military expedition in Sri Lanka. Hussain castigated India 'for its singular failure to evolve a friction-free relationship with any of its neighbours'. India was concerned about Pakistan, not for its friendship, but for its nuclear capability.

India's Chief of Naval Staff, Admiral J. G. Nadkarni's recent comment on Pakistan's nuclear capability was almost identical to what Raju G. C. Thomas had stated. Nadkarni said: 'Pakistan would be able to establish a deterrent nuclear posture against India, rendering in the process the balance of conventional forces considerably less significant than it is today.' In other words, despite obvious disparity of power between the two states, India would not be able to browbeat Pakistan or establish its hegemony (perhaps a softer word, leadership) over Pakistan. In so far as Kashmir was concerned, Hussain believed that it had become India's Bangladesh, an object of brutal repression, earning India an unsavoury reputation.

Finally, Hussain quite realistically assessed the changed orientations of the Soviet Union towards India, and of the United States towards Pakistan; both superpowers were trying to create diplomatic distance between themselves and their 'friends'. Would it create a window of opportunity for India and Pakistan to establish a diplomatic rapprochement, if not an entente? Hardly; this is the message of Robert Wirsing, who has extensively analysed India-Pakistan relations since 1947.

Among the American scholars, no one has devoted more time and energy in studying the Kashmir problem than Professor Robert Wirsing. He prefaced his extensive analysis of the India-Pakistan conflict over Kashmir with Richard N. Haass's thesis that 'most of the time eliminating the sources of conflict simply isn't possible; hence, diplomacy that focuses on rooting them out is very likely to be frustrated. Better that peacemakers focus on the more modest objectives of conflict *management* than for their efforts to perish on the field of conflict *resolution*.' Probably, Haass had the Arab-Israeli conflict in his mind, which is likely to remain beyond the therapeutic touch of diplomacy; but the India-Pakistan conflict, while it has



remained intractable, is a love-hate relationship, in contrast to the hate-hate involvement of the Zionists with the Palestinians, where the latter have ended as the net losers. Such has not been the case with Pakistan or India!

Wirsing reviewed all the bilateral negotiations between India and Pakistan over Kashmir and catalogued their failures. At that point in time, he had ruled out the possibility of the United States and the Soviet Union leading 'the way towards reconciliation in South Asia'. Consequently, he suggested that 'for the indefinite future, India and Pakistan will have to cope with the Kashmir dispute essentially on their own and in terms less pretentious than conflict resolution.' However, Wirsing offered no theoretical explanation why the Kashmir issue was beyond the realm of negotiated settlement. There was only one thread of explanation in his analysis, which suggested that, since bilateral negotiations and the UN sponsored mediations have found no solution in 44 years, a solution was unlikely to emerge in the future. Thus, the management of the conflict was the only option left to both states. Maybe, just maybe, Wirsing's prescription is appropriate; at least it should give a moment of reflection to the leaders of both states.

A thoughtful scholar of India's foreign policy, and deeply immersed in India's history, Maya Chadda's analysis of ethnic and communal conflicts, and their impact on India's foreign policy, is a philosophic treatise which enlightens the reader a great deal about India's foreign relations, especially with its sub-continental neighbours. She examined the domestic determinants of India's foreign policy through the prism of Indian history, and presented a very forceful and credible exposition. While this thematic explanation commands respectful examination, it must, however, be noted that all states – young and old – are to some extent captives of their historical experience.

Chadda's thesis, at least in this author's assessment, verged almost on historical determinism: that, historically, India had always been 'a subcontinental multinational state', and that all ancient to modern empires emerged 'by establishing hegemony over diverse regional kingdoms'. These states created in their times overarching ideology, recognised the extant social order and did not eliminate local political structures. Historical imperatives lead modern India to treat the whole of South Asia as a strategic entity. That was 'why India has opposed external intervention and great-power presence in the region', perceiving a threat to India's security (arms aid to Pakistan) and a challenge to Indian claims to preeminence in the Indian Ocean and South Asia. According to Chadda, the policy of non-alignment was eminently appropriate to her pursuit of influence and economic development with Soviet collaboration.

In conclusion, Chadda said that 'as modern India looks back to its past, it automatically turns to the example of the empire nation-states ... these have contributed cultural and political substance to the notion of India'. This author must confess that he too was carried away by the broad sweep of Islamic historical determinism in his *Muslim Nationalism in India and Pakistan* (Washington, 1963), along with Professors Aziz Ahmad<sup>39</sup> and I. H. Qureshi.<sup>40</sup> For Chadda, the model empires were the Mauryas, the Guptas and the empire of Harshvardhana in the 7th century; for these scholars the history of Pakistan (i.e. the Indus Valley) started in the first decade of the eighth century, when Islam entered Sindh. Historically, the worldview is so radically different.

But years of political reflection and study of international relations have at least taught this author that, depending on the contact lens one might wear at times, one can learn from history any lesson one wants. In the contemporary state system, most states are multi-religious and multi-ethnic. The basic challenge facing them is to manage this diversity. Exclusive historical claims leading to historical determinism foster exclusivity and intolerance towards other religious traditions than one's own. India is the colossus of South Asia, becoming more powerful day by day; must power translate itself in political hegemony as a preordained dictum of India's foreign policy? India certainly has a choice – either to respect its neighbours in helpful ways or to brutishly dominate them, impelled by the Dangerfield syndrome. This is the basic challenge to India's foreign policy.

Saleem M. M. Qureshi's contribution on regionalism, ethnic conflict and Islam, and their impact on Pakistan's foreign policy, was an angry essay of a secularist Pakistani-Canadian scholar, who has seen political Islam, and especially its traditional interpretation, as the bane of Pakistan's political culture. A well-published scholar, Qureshi has let his anger at Pakistan's failures take the best of his judgement. His vision of Pakistan is expressed in romantic 'poetry' and he views Pakistan's failures as an unpardonable 'sin'.

To him, the advent of Pakistan 'was the realization of a dream and a vision ... the harbinger of great things to come, perhaps the revival of the glory that Islam had been at one time'. How dare they shatter the dream and sully that hallowed vision! Qureshi's disenchantment with Pakistani leaders and military dictators was obvious and understandable; also obvious was his pain for the promised land, where the political culture became harsh and intolerant, and leaders were not geniuses, and citizens refused to be ten feet tall. In Qureshi's judgement, modernist Muslim leaders abandoned Islam to the ruthless exploitation of the orthodoxy,

while they inadequately comprehended the spirit of modern nationalism. In general, they remained engaged in the pursuit of selfish ends. To him, this was a grand betrayal.

The ruling elite of Pakistan, he rightly believed, never seriously adopted a nation-building strategy. However, his critique of secularism was not far off the mark, while its head-on collision with Chadda's interpretation of it as the anchor of Indian democracy was inescapable. To Qureshi, when secularism was emphasised in a multi-group state like India, its practical implication for the minorities was the majority's demand that they give up their own cultural particularities, and conform to the cultural norms of the majority. Consequently, the minorities resisted to protect their identity, as was the Muslims' situation in India, and the political culture was then filled with intercommunal violence. In Qureshi's judgement, there was not a single multi-group state in the contemporary state system which could be held up as a success story of secularism for nation building. What would be a good strategy for nation building? No clearly cut thought filters through his confabulations, except perhaps one useful nugget – tolerance.

Qureshi's treatment of Pakistan's foreign policy was inadequate, almost an afterthought to his prologue of Islam's role in Pakistan. Rightly, he started with a truism that 'the foreign policy of a state usually reflects its domestic policy'. From this statement, he derived another truism: 'The constant factor in Pakistan's foreign policy has been its antipodal stance to that of India', and 'Pakistan has identified itself with the Muslim states in the Middle East.' However, Pakistan's relations with the United States had remained unsatisfactory to both allies; 'American private sector investment, technology transfer and trade have remained woefully insignificant.' Qureshi's judgement on the Pakistan side of this bilateral equation is noteworthy: 'With very little provocation, Pakistanis can be aroused to vent their anti-Western feeling and become anti-American.' Qureshi's treatment of US–Pakistan relations was impressionistic, and was not an exhaustive analysis of a long-standing diplomatic relationship between a superpower and a medium-size regional state, which, by its very nature, goes through ups and downs because of the United States' engagement in global politics.

An eminent jurist of Pakistan, who recently retired from the Supreme Court of Pakistan, Dr Justice Javid Iqbal, discussed the potential for rapprochement between India and Pakistan. Like a jurist, he endeavoured very assiduously to assess both countries' responsibilities in souring mutual relations. Strangely enough, one finds Maya Chadda's theme of centre-periphery struggle in Indian history, especially that of Muslim

regions against the Hindu centre, in Justice Iqbal's formulations. Before 1947, 'Muslims wanted safeguards in the provinces where they were in minorities, and full autonomy in the regions of the sub-continent where they constituted majorities, they also wanted to co-exist with the Hindus.' Precisely for these reasons, Justice Iqbal argued, the Muslim League accepted the Cabinet Mission Plan of 1946, which was designed to satisfy Muslim demand for autonomy, and the Congress's demand for a United India.

These days it was generally accepted in India that Nehru had scuttled the Cabinet Mission Plan, which paved the way to the creation of Pakistan. Once Pakistan had come into existence it should have led to reconciliation and fraternal relationships between the two states. However, he noted that despite Indian leaders' declarations that they desired friendship with Pakistan, 'they have so far not adopted appropriate policy which could lead to that friendship'. He also apportioned part of responsibility for this deadlock to Pakistan, which had 'not made any really determined effort to establish friendly relations with India', and has instead 'maintained a competitive and combative posture' toward India.

'This specific policy', according to Justice Iqbal, 'has cost Pakistan the squandering of enormous resources on the military', which has obviously retarded Pakistan's national development. Finally, he applauded the India-Pakistan agreement not to attack one another's nuclear installations, and urged both countries 'to make a joint declaration renouncing nuclear weapons'.

## PROSPECTS FOR REGIONAL COOPERATION

Finally, three well-known scholars – Shireen T. Hunter, Sumit Ganguly and Lawrence Ziring – explored the prospects of regional cooperation. There are, in fact, two distinct models of cooperation: one discussed by Hunter, which deals with the Southwest Asian states, and the second related to the prospects of cooperation between the South Asian states. The latter was explored at length by Sumit Ganguly. Obviously, Pakistan can play a useful role in both arrangements of regional cooperation, if they ever get off the ground. Lawrence Ziring did not discuss the prospects of regional cooperation, but the issue of Pakistan's nuclear weapons capability, which certainly impinges upon the bilateral relations between India and Pakistan. Consequently, its shadow falls on the security environment of entire South Asia, having a profound impact on the cooperation-antagonism balance between the two major actors in South

Asia. The nuclear issue has already brought to the surface latent antagonism on this issue between the United States and Pakistan.

A Deputy Director of the Middle East Studies at the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington, DC, Shireen Hunter's analysis was essentially bifocal: she saw very limited scope for a security compact among the Islamic states of Pakistan, Iran, Turkey and Afghanistan, while visualising the possibility of economic cooperation, not only among these Southwest Asian states, but also with the Soviet Central Asian republics. In her scheme of analysis, economic cooperation had to be the first step, which might lead to security cooperation as well. At the current stage of their development, Hunter recognised 'significant complementarities', which existed between these states. 'Iran's energy and other resources, Turkey's industrial and technological base, and Pakistan's vast potential properly utilised could give rise to a viable economic cooperation.' She left out the role of Afghanistan to the future developments of the internal struggles, while she suspected the sectarian oriented motives of Saudi Arabia, which might even spoil relations between Iran and Pakistan.

Sumit Ganguly presented a fairly detailed chronological account of the SAARC's developmental stages; but then raised the ultimate question, much like Shireen Hunter, of whether or not SAARC had accomplished anything or had the potential to achieve anything in the bitterly hostile environment of South Asia. SAARC had been unable to deal with political issues, which needed its therapeutic touch; it had so far only installed direct dialing telephone system, allowed members of parliament, and judges, interstate travel without visas, and encouraged tourism. Well, something was better than nothing; according to some the very existence of SAARC was an achievement by itself!

Indeed, both regions, of Southwest Asia and South Asia, had miles to go before they could keep any promise of regional cooperation. Clearly, this situation paved the way for the major powers' diplomatic intrusions into these regions, which might or might not be agreeable to the national interests of some regional hegemonies.

A well-known specialist on South Asia, and especially on Pakistan, Lawrence Ziring's study was 'not a technical excursion into Pakistan's nuclear program'. He accepted the US intelligence organisations' conclusion that Pakistan 'currently possesses nuclear weapons'; and that Pakistan had joined the nuclear weapons club. His essay, consequently, examined the advantages, as well as the disadvantages, for Pakistan of possessing nuclear weapons, in the regional as well as the global context. Although his arguments for both sides were quite powerful, yet ultimately

he tilted in favour of the US non-proliferation policy. Even though they are well known, his arguments deserve serious attention nevertheless.

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## 2 US Strategic Interests in South Asia

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### I

The literature on US strategic interests in South Asia is relatively thin compared with other parts of the world, in particular the regions immediately to the east and west.<sup>1</sup> The reason is not far to seek: US strategic interests in South Asia are of a low order, challenged only by central Africa for last place in the list of American concerns. The United States is not and, for the foreseeable future, cannot be militarily threatened from South Asia. The region is not particularly useful as a base of operations for the US to use against its principal rivals. South Asia is of virtually no importance to it economically. The litany is familiar and has never been seriously challenged.<sup>2</sup>

The voices raised to protest at this ordering on essentially moral grounds have not been very convincing in terms of the power and political considerations that have inhered in the term 'strategic interests'. The fact that a third of humanity lives in South Asia is interesting, but not immediately relevant to American security. The importance of India as the world's largest democracy (and of Pakistan as one of the shakier ones) stirs relatively few hearts deeply. The assertion that South Asia is of concern to the US because its poverty is such a challenge to American consciences is largely lost on individuals who are concerned with more tangible challenges.

There are still other voices that point to the future, but they too have had little impact. Few decision makers look very far into the future and, besides, earlier prophets of South Asia's importance (Chester Bowles comes particularly to mind) have overstated the urgency of their cases. The huge markets for American goods on the one hand, and the power potentials of India on the other, have not come about in the several decades since they were first mooted.

Broad US objectives in Asia have traditionally centred on the maintenance of a balance of power whereby no other nation comes to dominate Asia. Although there were illusions in decades past that India could be some sort of counterweight to China, that issue hardly arises



now. South Asia does not have much relevance to the overall Asian security equation, which is primarily a function of Sino-Soviet relations, with Japan as a factor of growing importance. India and Pakistan have generally cancelled each other out as actors on the Asian scene, and unless and until India develops both the will and the capability to play a much larger role in Asia, the subcontinent will remain a sideshow to the central Asian power balance, just as it does to the global scene.

Finally, there are those voices who stress the importance of South Asia not for itself but because of its potential as a counter in the competition between the United States and the Soviet Union, or in some other global policy, or because it is located near regions that are important to the United States. These arguments have carried much weight at times, and all of the serious intrusions that Washington has made onto the South Asian scene have resulted from global considerations. This subordination of regional to global concerns has led to serious distortions in American policies towards South Asia as such. Transregional motives also provide an extremely unsatisfactory basis for a security policy towards the subcontinent. The level of interest in these neighbouring areas can be subject to considerable fluctuation, and by focusing on those interests, US policies toward South Asia as such have often been in faulty perspective.

## II

Developing a security policy toward South Asia – or even making an assessment of security interests there – is hampered by the fact that South Asia is not on the conceptual maps of Americans. Since its intrinsic security interest is small to the United States, and since these interests have been largely defined in terms of the importance of neighbouring regions, South Asia's relationship to these regions takes on special, even decisive importance. American leaders, since at least the time of Eisenhower, have sought to 'include' South Asia into either Southeast or Southwest Asia rather than handle the region as an entity on its own.<sup>3</sup> This proclivity has been strengthened by the attitudes of several of the regional states. Pakistan would much rather be thought of as a Southwest Asian state; that not only enhances its value to the United States as an ally but also reflects the basic Pakistani preference for ties to its generally friendly Muslim neighbours to the west, rather than to its hostile Hindu neighbour to the east. Sri Lanka has cast longing eyes towards Southeast Asia – in part for economic reasons but also as an alternative source of support in the face of a frequently threatening India. Nepal has played games with China.

This conceptual problem is highlighted by the fact that South Asia has never found a real home in the Washington bureaucracy. The State Department has resolutely fended off Congressional attempts to create a separate bureau for South Asia, preferring to keep it within the Bureau of Near East and South Asian affairs – a monstrosity that stretches from Morocco to Bangladesh.<sup>4</sup> The Agency for International Development, on the other hand, lumps South Asia together with East Asia. Most interesting from a strategic point of view, the Defense Department has bifurcated South Asia. Pakistan is included in the area of the Central Command while the rest of the subcontinent is within the purview of the Commander-in-Chief of the Pacific region. Each of these organisational solutions makes sense in terms of bureaucracies, but in no case do they promote a specific focus on South Asia as such. By simply denying the strategic and political unity of the subcontinent, the Pentagon ignores the fact that the primary security concerns of the South Asian states are with each other.

### III

Prior to the Indo-Pakistani war of 1965, there was a case to be made that the United States was actively interested and involved in South Asia – largely in pursuit of global objectives to be sure, but in ways that involved strengthening the economies and political structures of the regional states. One could say with little exaggeration that, until 1965, the United States sought to play the role of security manager of South Asia and was willing to expend great effort and resources in the process.

The 1965 war marked a turning point for a variety of reasons, and, in the following five years or so, US interest dropped off dramatically. A major factor was the disillusionment in the United States over the fact that the two large South Asian nations had become embroiled in a war that was counter to US political and economic objectives in the subcontinent – and used US-provided weaponry in the process. Also important were the increasing pinch on resources that the United States had available to pursue its policies and the emerging preoccupation with Vietnam that would ultimately lead to a broad disillusionment with US involvement in the Third World. Lastly, of course, the US rapprochement with China removed a major factor that had impelled the United States into an active role in South Asia.

Beginning with the Soviet mediation between Pakistan and India at Tashkent in 1966, Moscow emerged in the role of security manager for the subcontinent, and the United States showed little disposition to challenge the situation. From that point onward, the *normal* level of US concern with

South Asia has been extremely low, reflecting a defensive posture concerned with ensuring that the Soviet Union did not achieve regional dominance. The 1971 war between India and Pakistan evoked a sharp reaction, but Washington's attention flagged as soon as the war was over, and for much of the rest of the decade was at a very low level in most respects, but especially in terms of strategic interest.

To the extent that there was a focus of US interest in South Asia in the 1970s, it was the nuclear issue. Much effort was expended in dealing with this problem, and the bilateral relationships between Washington on the one hand and Delhi and Islamabad on the other hand were badly shaken. Here, too, however, US concern was not primarily with its relations with India or Pakistan, or even the specific South Asian implications of proliferation (which could probably have been better dealt with by more flexible policies), but with the implications of South Asian nuclear weapons for the global non-proliferation regime.

The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan triggered another frenzy of activity in Washington, the effects of which have still not died out. This concern was not over the fate of Afghanistan as such; that distant, landlocked nation had long since been relegated to the Soviet sphere of influence. Rather, it had to do with the implications of Soviet aggression for both United States global concerns and the transregional interest of the United States and its allies in the Gulf. Whether some part of this enhanced concern over events in South Asia can be maintained once the Afghanistan issue is ultimately settled is central to the specific topic of this Chapter and to the longer-range assessment of US interests in Asia.

#### IV

For the past decade, the principal strategic focus of the United States has been on Pakistan. Aid programmes totalling more than \$7 billion over 11 years testify to this focus and are all the more remarkable in that they have come in a decade when US budgetary pressures were intense and when Pakistan continued to work on developing nuclear weapons in direct contravention of American law. The US focus on Pakistan was inevitable for several reasons. First, Pakistan was the regional state most directly involved, both as an object of Soviet threat and as a channel to the resistance in Afghanistan. Second, the United States had a long, if turbulent, history of association with Pakistan that provided a familiar framework for cooperation. Finally, there was no alternative focus of support since neither India nor Iran was available as an ally in this cause.

Pakistan was thus central to the US response to the global problem posed by the Soviet invasion. Without Pakistani backing, it would have been impossible for the United States to orchestrate its programme of military support to the resistance and, as it turned out, Pakistan became the organiser of shaping Third World opinion against the Soviets. At least as important, however, was the fact that the Soviet invasion was interpreted by many Americans as a more or less direct threat to the US and general Western position in the Gulf. Pakistan, as we have noted, likes to think of itself as a part of the Islamic Middle East and has in fact been able to develop some important economic, political and security relationships with the nations of the Gulf region. These, plus Pakistan's geographic location just east of the Gulf, refocused American attention on Pakistan as an element of its regional Gulf strategy as well as its globally-minded response to the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan as such.

Even while the United States was concentrating on Pakistan in strategic terms, it was also rethinking its policy towards India. The initial outrage generated by India's public acquiescence in the Soviet attack was somewhat ameliorated by time and replaced by a growing realisation that, whatever its shortcomings, India was the preeminent power in South Asia and, ultimately, the only force that could prevent Soviet domination of the subcontinent. The Reagan administration adopted a surprisingly forthcoming attitude on the key issues of technology transfer and military production cooperation, and readily supported India's regional peacekeeping endeavours during the civil war in Sri Lanka and the coup in the Maldives. India, for its part, initiated a series of economic reforms that were welcomed in the United States. It was by no means a full rapprochement between Washington and New Delhi; both sides had serious reservations about the policies of the other and their primary political alignments still remain with the other's principal adversary (India-USSR; Pakistan-US). Nonetheless, it introduced a significant new flexibility into American perceptions of South Asia.<sup>5</sup>

## V

What are the current factors that shape US interests in South Asia? To what extent are they continuations of past trends or are they shaped by new developments?

Soviet forces have withdrawn from Afghanistan; it is less clear that communism will be rooted out of the country, but that is a matter that,

ultimately, will have to be sorted out by Afghans, and there are signs that the United States and USSR are going to let them do just that.

Virtually irrespective of how the Afghans work out their future, the strategic factors that shaped US policy through the 1980s will be greatly changed. The direct threat to Pakistan has been removed; the Soviet threat to Gulf oil has receded; and the broader thrust of Soviet Third World adventurism that had disturbed the West so much in the late 1970s came to an abrupt halt in Afghanistan.

Looking first at the *regional* situation in South Asia, the gross power relationships among the component states of the regions are hardly changed. The fact of Indian predominance has been unquestioned for some two decades and, if anything, disparities have grown as India has launched upon a programme of military modernisation far beyond anything that Pakistan could hope to emulate. There are, however, two important shifting factors.

The first, India's assertion of regional preeminence, is not totally new, but the combination of enhanced capability for relatively distant operations and the willingness India has shown, in Sri Lanka and the Maldives, to use that capability represent quantitative, perhaps even qualitative, new factors on the South Asian scene.<sup>6</sup> The Indian conventional military capability is still not on a level that would permit a low-cost victory over Pakistan, but it is clearly large enough to handle problems with any other of its neighbours. While the new Indian government, headed by V. P. Singh, has indicated a desire to be more cooperative with its neighbours and has had to absorb a policy set-back in Sri Lanka, the thrust in Indian policy is still towards regional hegemony. Furthermore, any hopes that Singh may have had for a marked improvement in relations with India's most important neighbour have run afoul of the insurgency in Kashmir and of Pakistan's relationship thereto. And, importantly, outside actors who might earlier have considered becoming involved, have shown themselves ready to acquiesce in India's assertion of an enhanced role short of war with Pakistan. (And, even then, there is little that an outside power realistically could or would do to intervene effectively.) If South Asia is to have a security manager in the future, it is likely to be India, not an outside power.

The second factor is the progress that India and Pakistan have both made in the nuclear area, underscored in India's case by a growing missile delivery capability. India and Pakistan have a poor relations and a record of fighting with each other. Yet both countries have competent military and civilian leaderships that have a clear understanding of what is involved.<sup>7</sup>

The nuclear progress made by Pakistan inevitably raises some questions as to India's regional dominance, since it dilutes India's preponderance in conventional weaponry, resulting in a virtual nuclear stand-off within South Asia. During the tensions over Kashmir in 1990, concern about nuclear escalations must have been a major consideration in the approaches taken by the two countries. It is argued by some that possession of nuclear capabilities by both India and Pakistan is likely to reduce the chances of the two going to war and therefore to prove to be stabilising in the region. That, however, is something better left to practitioners of deterrence theory rather than something to be experimented with in the real world.

The current US level of strategic interest in South Asia in strictly regional terms is affected by these two factors but still remains low, especially as the Afghanistan situation sorts itself out. The Indian assumption of a stronger leadership role in the region is, on the whole, welcome to the United States as long as the role does not result in a major crisis in Indo-Pakistan relations. This qualification has come to the fore as the United States seeks to defuse the tensions over Kashmir, but India is an acceptable security manager in terms of US interests in South Asia since, if it plays its role effectively, the United States can reduce its own level of strategic involvement still further.

Nuclear issues are obviously more troubling, especially as there has been a breakdown of the international non-proliferation regime. It must be borne in mind, however, that neither India nor Pakistan is likely to pose a nuclear threat to the United States nor to any of its allies, nor does America expect either country to disseminate nuclear weapons technology still further. The United States has come to deal with the regional implications of proliferation in South Asia with a considerable degree of composure. After the intense activity of the Carter years, it became clear that there was not all that much that the United States could do to prevent proliferation, and the Reagan administration essentially turned a blind eye to the problem, especially given its preoccupation with Afghanistan. This realisation has led Washington to focus more on limiting the scope of the programmes – and preventing testing if possible – rather than on reversing them, which is seen as unattainable.

The United States has, as we have seen, had strong interests in the *transregional* sphere of South Asian activity. These interests have not abated but they have taken on a different context as the threat element has been reassessed.

In *Southeast Asia*, US interests are increasingly economic in nature. The Soviet-Vietnamese connection remains a source of concern to

Washington, especially the Soviet naval and air bases in Vietnam, but the overall reassessment of the Soviet threat in the Third World is progressively eroding that concern and Washington is making tentative overtures to Hanoi. Thus Southeast Asia does not impinge in any measurable way on US security interests in South Asia, and in any event the region has been virtually immune to South Asian (namely Indian) influence for decades and remains so today.

*China* has always been of much greater interests to the United States (and, incidentally, to the Soviet Union) than has South Asia. In the past – notably at the time of the 1962 Sino-Indian war – it had important influence on US, South Asian policies, but now the interrelationships are seen as tenuous. Mainly, the United States is concerned that events in South Asia do not adversely affect the China relationship.<sup>8</sup> Few Americans believe that China poses any real threat to South Asia, and the gradual thaw taking place in Sino-Indian relations underlines this. Thus the China factor has fairly well disappeared from the list of American security concerns in South Asia.

*The Gulf* has been second only to the Soviet rivalry as a source of American concern with South Asia.<sup>9</sup> This interest ballooned in 1973 following the first oil crisis, and grew still further in 1979 with the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and the Iran–Iraq war. The Gulf became the focus of the ‘arc of crises’ and the ‘third strategic zone’, and the Carter Doctrine set forth the American resolve to defend its interests there. There then followed a reassessment of concerns with the Gulf, not particularly US interests there – since it was understood that those would remain and even grow as America again become dependent on Gulf oil for its own economy – but of the threat to those interests.<sup>10</sup> According to this reassessment, the Carter Doctrine was an overreaction even in terms of events in 1979–80, and by the end of the decade had become an anomaly. The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan was probably unrelated to ideas of southward expansion; the Iranian threat to the Gulf had faded with the setbacks Teheran encountered in the Iran–Iraq war; the nations of the Gulf had shown considerable ability to protect their own interests; US military power was largely irrelevant to what threats did exist; and there was probably no serious danger of a catastrophic disruption of the oil supply under almost any circumstances.

The Iraqi move against Kuwait in the summer of 1990 introduced still another phase of US attitudes toward the Gulf and challenged the set of assumptions described above. The critics of Gulf policy had not factored Saddam Hussein adequately into their calculations, and the dispatch of a quarter of a million men and women at the cost of \$2.5 billion suggests

that US military power is not all that irrelevant in certain circumstances. The Bush administration did not accept the revised line of thinking in any event; indeed, no administration could ever have done so to the extent that it made the Gulf an area of unconcern. The oil of the Gulf is simply too important. To say that much, however, is not to argue for a return to earlier levels of concern.

It is too early to outline many lessons learned from the current Iraq-Kuwait crisis. We have been reminded once again that the Gulf remains an important and volatile area of the world. The level of support that the United States has gained for its position, and the solidarity of the Gulf countries in protecting their interests, are extremely positive signs. In addition, the fact that the Soviet Union has given support, albeit reluctantly, to the US position means that a new overall approach to the Gulf should be worked out once the current crisis has passed.

The meaning that the new situation in the Gulf has for the United States' South Asia policy will also have to be weighed carefully. On the one hand, it refocuses our attention on the fact that South Asia is near an area that remains very important and volatile. At the same time, however, the degree to which South Asia has been involved in the affair is also instructive. India has carefully stood aside; Pakistan agreed to send a modest contingent to join the US and other forces defending Saudi Arabia. This was at least as much a response to Saudi urgings as those of the United States, and was no more than a gesture, reflecting Pakistan's ambivalent position in the politics of the Gulf.

Even before the Gulf crisis, the outreach of Pakistan and India towards the Gulf had diminished. The role of Pakistan in the security affairs of Saudi Arabia was sharply cut back when Pakistan withdrew its combat forces for reasons that are still unclear but involved either a dispute over deployment or a Pakistani refusal to exclude Shi'ites from their ranks, as the Saudis had demanded. Both India and Pakistan still have important economic ties and send large numbers of their citizens to work in the Gulf countries, but the number of migrants levelled off or even decreased as shrinking oil revenues limited the need for foreign workers, and other nationalities were tapped to do some of the work. There is no question that the relationship of the Gulf to Pakistan and, to a lesser extent, India is important for all parties; it is, however, no longer growing as it was earlier. The roles that Pakistan and India can play to further US interests in the Gulf region will probably remain limited.

India shares with the US an interest in stability and the unimpeded flow of reasonably priced oil, but these shared objectives are narrow and India's role, as leader of the nonaligned and a staunch opponent of superpower



involvement in the Indian Ocean region, limits potential for broader cooperation. Pakistan, too, has its own agenda in West Asia, one that differs in major respects from America's. Pakistan would never be likely to cooperate with the United States in actions directed against Iran or in support of Israel – two of the more likely contingencies in which the United States might need its help. Even the international consensus against Iraq evoked a minimum Pakistani response. Earlier ideas of a 'strategic consensus' that would link the United States, Pakistan and other like-minded nations have been quietly laid to rest. There remains, however, the fact that Pakistan has an important role to play in lending stability to the Gulf, and is uniquely well placed to be of assistance to regimes there that come under pressure from external or internal enemies. That remains, then, a matter of considerable importance in the US calculus. Like India, it remains a useful potential associate in working with this important area; neither, however, can be thought of as an ally.<sup>11</sup>

Finally, on the *global* level, the picture has changed markedly in ways that relate to US strategic interests in South Asia. Specifically, the Soviet Union has largely withdrawn from serious competition for influence in the Third World. The impetus that drove the Soviets from Angola to Ethiopia to Afghanistan in the 1970s has evaporated and the Gorbachev policies have succeeded in convincing the world that the Soviet Union does not pose an imminent military threat. Equally important, since the Soviets have stepped back from the competition, there is much less political and psychological need for the United States to compete with them for position in the Third World.

This new global structure has obvious implications for the level of US interest in South Asia. If the Soviets are out of the game, the United States can greatly reduce its stakes there, since it has been the Soviet rivalry that has motivated so much of US activity in the past. It is difficult now to recall the time when South Asia was seen as a vital element of the ring of containment that John Foster Dulles sought to build around the Soviet Union and China. This revised line of thinking obviously needs some qualification – for the moment, we shall limit ourselves to noting that South Asia is the area where the Soviets have applied their new approach *least* consistently. Although their troops have withdrawn, the Soviet Union is still deeply involved in support of the Kabul regime, at least through supplies and perhaps advisers as well.

In addition, Moscow views South Asia quite differently from Washington. For the Soviets, it is not the least, but one of the most important Third World areas. Their geostrategic considerations are precisely the reciprocal of the United States, and India has come to play an

important political and even economic role in Soviet considerations. While there has been some reduction in the enthusiasm of the Indo-Soviet connection, it remains one of great emphasis for the Soviet Union and has been the subject of more attention than any other Third World tie. The Soviets also have important interests in Pakistan. Even during the worst days of conflict over Afghanistan, Moscow was careful to keep channels open to Islamabad.

Pakistan, too, recognises the value of good relations with the USSR and can be expected to respond to new Soviet overtures once the fighting in Afghanistan winds down. The Soviet Union will necessarily remain an important presence – probably the most important external security presence – in South Asia. Even with these qualifications, however, South Asia cannot be regarded as a major element in US strategy *vis-à-vis* the USSR.

The picture that emerges from this brief survey is one of change but also of persistence. So far, nothing fundamental has changed beyond question, either in South Asia or in the relationships of the global system to it. At the same time, however, there is great *potential* for change in many of these relationships. In a few – notably the Gorbachev restructuring of the Soviet Union's approach to the Third World and to international relations more generally – it is hard to avoid the conclusion that the change is irreversible over the foreseeable future and must be accepted as the starting point for policy even if some question marks remain.

The bilateral, regional, transregional and global considerations, taken together, yield a US strategic interest in South Asia that has much less support than it had at the start of the 1980s. It is important to bear in mind, however, that the level of interest generated in 1979 (and continued on through most of the decade) was abnormally high and cannot be taken as a baseline for projecting the future. The baseline that should be used is the very low level of interest that has been characteristic since the mid-1960s. The interesting question is whether the future will lie more or less along that line or somewhere between it and the higher levels of the 1980s.

It is perhaps remarkable that US interest in South Asia has not dropped more rapidly than it has. The inconclusive situation in Afghanistan has been a major contributor to the maintenance of interest, as was the coming to power of a democratic regime in Pakistan under the leadership of Benazir Bhutto. There have been no challenges that forced the US to make policy decisions, and there is an element of inertia in policy and a reluctance to think through new situations – especially when the old ones have worked out as well for American interests as have those in South

Asia over the past several years. As we look at the situation, we would be well advised to understand that we have been given a sort of reprieve; an opportunity to think through the future of US interests and of US policy before the implications of Afghanistan fall due.<sup>12</sup>

## VI

What, then, might we expect South Asia to look like in the coming years?<sup>13</sup>

I expect that the nations of the region will hold together in roughly their present configurations for the rest of the century. It seems just about as certain, however, that there will be heavy weather ahead on the domestic political front for all of them. Only India is now fairly secure in its political system and even it is being pressed hard by communal and separatist tendencies. The prospects for a continuation of Indian democracy on the lines that we have known it for the past decades are not assured. The Pakistan situation is still more questionable and hangs very much in the balance. The outcome of the current process could well determine the future of US-Pakistan relations.

The relationship between India and Pakistan will remain the key to the politics of the subcontinent and the way in which outsiders relate to it. With the advent of a new generation of leadership in the persons of Rajiv Gandhi and Benazir Bhutto, and again with the advent of the V. P. Singh government in New Delhi, there were growing hopes for a rapprochement between the two nations – one that would reduce the temptations and opportunities for external involvement. This situation would generally correspond to the reduced levels of interests of the outside powers and the stage could be set for a distinctly new phase in the relationship between the South Asian subsystem and the global system.

Unfortunately, the chances of this happy evolution are very clouded. Developments in Kashmir dealt a sharp setback to any prospects for reconciliation, and even the possibility of a major war in the near future cannot be excluded. Even had the Kashmir problem not arisen, however, prospects for a favourable evolution of Indo-Pakistani relationships were tenuous at best. Neither the Pakistani nor the Indian government has the popular mandate and parliamentary majority that would permit it to make the kinds of compromise necessary if New Delhi and Islamabad are going to find a way out of their long-standing impasse. Indeed, there will be pressures on each to use the traditional hostility between their two countries as a means of generating public support. With the best of will, it

will be difficult for either country to find a way of living with India's growing military power and ability to assert regional dominance. While it is likely that the two sides' nuclear competition will be kept within bounds and perhaps even reduce the likelihood of conventional conflict, a nuclear balance can be nerve-wracking.

To the extent the United States and USSR are determined to remain aloof from South Asian problems, this may not have all that much meaning for the US – there are reasonable prospects for stability and the gradual development of an autonomous South Asian subsystem. That, however, is an optimistic outlook. It is just as possible that a major breakdown could lead to pressures to draw the superpowers back into the equation. India's and Pakistan's enhanced military, even nuclear capabilities will make it extremely difficult for invited outsiders not to become involved in South Asian security matters.

As far as the transregional setting is concerned, the focus of difficulty will most likely continue to be the Gulf – and, as US policy seems to see it – its appendage, the Indian Ocean. Prediction is unwise in an area with so many volatile elements, especially since Iran and Iraq must be fitted into Gulf subsystem in a way that minimises the potential for disruption there. In that regard, and in the region more broadly, there are grounds for cautious optimism at best. More confidently, however, one can predict that the South Asian nations will not be major actors on the Gulf scene, neither as instigators of trouble or as adjuncts to US policy. If anything, their involvement should be positive since they, too, are interested in a stable Gulf and have some modest contributions to make.

The Indian Ocean region more broadly also deserves some notice, specifically in terms of India's aspirations there. With the development of a distant operations capability and the acquisitions of new generations of equipment, India has capabilities that far exceed any current threat, or employment, in terms of traditional security concerns. Under these circumstances, it seems likely that India will be looking for things to do with its new forces, and the Indian Ocean is the area into which it will most likely extend itself. Even though New Delhi may take a while to recover from a modest case of burnt fingers as a result of the Sri Lankan adventure, there is widespread expectation that India will do some more distant security managing should trouble erupt in small islands such as Mauritius. It is even conceivable that India will adopt an aggressive posture towards its neighbours to the east and west (and its neighbours to the east are growing increasingly apprehensive) but on the whole that is unlikely. Some of these neighbours are close associates of the United States, however, and the situation needs to be addressed by policy planners.<sup>14</sup>

India may become still less tolerant of foreign military presences in the Indian Ocean, especially that of the United States. Indian nuclear submarines will hardly begin sinking US warships but Indian political pressure on the American presence (especially Diego Garcia) will persist and, in an extreme case, US naval commanders will have to take into account the existence of a potent and threatening Indian navy when US forces are operating in support of objectives that the Indians oppose (e.g. bringing aid to a beleaguered Israel).

It is difficult to see how South Asia might regain importance in US global strategy. A resumption of the Cold War is of course possible; Mr Gorbachev does not come with a convincing warranty. It strains the imagination, however, to think of even a bellicose Soviet government threatening to push into South Asia or the Gulf. Competition for influence in the Third World generally between the United States and the Soviet Union is unlikely until the Soviet Union finds some way to change its image as a failed system. Nor is a resurgent China likely to surge southward over the Himalayas. Washington, Moscow and Beijing have all learned some expensive lessons about waging their competition in areas where it will run into Third World nationalism. American security concerns about the Third World generally, and South Asia specifically, will increasingly result from purely regional and transregional considerations, with much less of the admixture of global concerns that gave them such saliency in the past.

## VII

Although the title of this chapter is limited to US 'interests', it is difficult to leave the discussion there. Interests should generate policy and, we can fairly ask, what are some of the policy implications of the interests described above? How should the United States relate to South Asia in order to maximise its own interests?

South Asia is, in fact, due for a reassessment by US policy makers. There remains a weighty case for still further disengagement from the region. Consider: there is no pressing competition with the Soviet Union; the problems of the Gulf have little connection with South Asia; the nuclear issue between India and Pakistan is relatively benign; and a South Asia whose security is managed by India with some degree of sensitivity is quite compatible with an American interest of minimum involvement. In fact, it could be argued, American disengagement from the region will facilitate movement towards a more autonomous South Asia and that is

something that can be welcomed as long as it similarly constrains other outsiders' security involvement.

The opposite case – for an intense US involvement in South Asia – is based on strategic interests. There are those who doubt the permanence of the present Soviet soft line in international affairs and point to the continuing vulnerability of the United States and its allies to an oil stoppage. We may also be in for a time of great turbulence not only in the Gulf but also in Central Asia, especially if the Soviet republics break away from Moscow and become the objects of rivalry for stronger nations near and far. In these circumstances, it could be important for the United States to have a foothold in the region and the most feasible one is in Pakistan. (I personally would want to be as far away as possible in the case of turbulence in Central Asia, but there are honest and informed opinions to the contrary.) Finally, there is the rarely spoken concern that a resurgent India could become a factor on the international strategic stage and act in ways that were contrary to American interests. US positions of strength in Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh or elsewhere in the Indian Ocean could be used to contain an Indian threat.

The problem in making this case is precisely the problem that has plagued those who want more favourable attention devoted to South Asia – the threats, like the promises, are either of a low order of likelihood or else lie very far in the future. Simple prudence requires that the United States keeps a close eye on South Asia and does not abandon all of its policy instruments for acting there. Prudence also suggests, however, that the United States should maintain a considerable distance from the security affairs of a region where its direct interests are low, its derived interests declining, the threat is vague and distant, and the costs of playing the game can be disproportionately high.

There have been frequent references to the 'balance of power' within South Asia and the relationship of the United States to it. There is not, however, and cannot be a balance of power within South Asia, since India is so preponderant. Stephen Cohen has written about a 'balanced imbalance' – not the clearest of concepts, but one that usefully suggests a situation in which India can be predominant in South Asia but not able to impose its will unilaterally on Pakistan. That, from the US point of view, is a perfectly acceptable situation since it provides a framework for the United States preferred regional outcome, one in which the constituent states of South Asia order their own security affairs. The key US interest is that the South Asian region live at reasonable peace with itself. The enmity between India and Pakistan is the channel by which outside influence enters South Asia and, at the same time, renders it almost

impossible for even well-intentioned outsiders to pursue productive and sensible policies toward the region.

In theory, such an autonomous regional arrangement could be achieved by a unilateral Indian imposition of hegemony which, if successful, would probably be adequate to American security needs. The possibility that a very powerful India would act in ways that were inimical to significant US political interests is a fairly distant contingency. Indian hegemony is not, in any case, a feasible scenario because of the balanced imbalance in the region – i.e. Pakistan is too significant a national entity to be dominated.

There appears to be no basis for the United States to reenter South Asia as the security organiser of the region. Such a role would be totally anachronistic and insupportable. A condominium approach, jointly with the Soviet Union, is not feasible for a number of reasons.<sup>15</sup> There is also not much of a case to be made for defining South Asia out of existence, *pace* the Central Command. South Asia is a strategic entity and must be dealt with as such. That it has relevance to neighbouring entities/subsystem does not detract from this fact. Europe is no less a coherent entity because it impacts on the Middle East.

The range of choice, seen from the point of view of current US ability to determine the situation in South Asia is thus narrow. Capabilities can, of course, be enhanced if it is determined that interests require it. That however does not seem to be the case in South Asia, now nor in the foreseeable future. America needs to shape a policy that is consistent with both its capabilities and its interests. Such a policy will not lie at any extreme for two reasons: first, its level of concern about South Asia is neither extremely high nor extremely low; similarly, the outlook for South Asia itself does not point unambiguously in any one direction, so that a policy of some flexibility will be needed to cover a fairly broad range of contingencies – the most likely of which are compatible with its interests.

Too often, in the past, the United States has simply disengaged from an area and walked away from it with little thought about the effects of its actions and even less planning as to the nature of its disengagement. This should not be the case even if radical disengagement were the preferred course of action for South Asia. But complete disengagement is not feasible, not least of all because 'strategic' interests do not comprise the full range of US interests in a country or region. 'Strategic' in the South Asian case is almost always 'extraregional'. If the United States is going to have a policy towards South Asia that goes beyond benign neglect, it

will have to be rooted in regional issues that are not 'strategic' in nature. The United States will also, however, have to devise a policy that is rooted in a much broader definition of the American security interest. One can only agree with Stephen Cohen's assessment:

America's paradox is that it still regards the South Asia region as essentially peripheral to its own vital security interests; in the meantime, it has established cultural and economic outposts in each South Asian state. One suspects that the true historic significance of this development will not be fully assimilated until an essentially military definition of security is supplanted by one more in keeping with America's ideological and economic, as well as military and strategic, interests.<sup>16</sup>

And, one might add, until an environmental dimension is added to our definition of security.<sup>17</sup> This sort of consideration goes far beyond the heading of 'strategic' interests as generally defined, and well beyond South Asian considerations. This kind of broad policy approach to South Asia, recognising the new dimensions of 'security' in the post-Cold War Era, must be global in scope and particularly involve a reassessment of our concerns in the Third World. Ironically, South Asia will probably be judged once again in terms of global, more than purely regional, considerations!

Here, however, South Asia may emerge much more as a driving factor, rather than as the hapless object of global policy. It is obvious that South Asia's growing population will have an increasing impact on the global environment, which, in many ways, could be more threatening than whatever military force India and Pakistan are able to develop. The consequences of an uninhibited 'second industrial revolution' in South Asia could spell ecological disaster. When the world confronts the next catastrophic food crisis, South Asia could be either its doom or its salvation, depending on whether the Eastern Ganges and Brahmaputra valleys have been developed to their potential. The list does not, of course, stop there; much of the world's heroin supply comes from or through South Asia; as South Asians migrate abroad, they will be both a major problems and an inestimable intellectual asset in the countries to which they go. In the world of such new concerns, size of populations will count heavily.

Such considerations go beyond the scope of this chapter, however, and beyond my expertise. Let us conclude with some observations on strategic policy more traditionally defined. Above all, a regionally focused US policy must be designed *primarily* to contribute as much as possible to the



normalisation of relations among the South Asian states, notably India and Pakistan. Realistically, American ability to shape such a development is limited. Much greater is its ability to place obstacles – often unthinkingly – in the way of movement toward regional cooperation. This is not an issue solely in South Asia; it is there, however, that it arises in its most striking form.<sup>18</sup>

A reasonable policy for the United States is thus rooted in regional realities and works with modest tools towards modest objectives. I have elsewhere outlined an approach to Pakistan that would seek to build down the US–Pakistan relationship to levels that are appropriate to the post-Afghanistan era, and also to the importance of Pakistan and to support for its democratic experiment.<sup>19</sup>

Policy towards India is less amenable to prescription but everything in the past years points towards a low posture there. The United States need not and cannot replace the Soviet Union as the primary concerned outside power, at least in the strategic terms. The passing of the Afghanistan issue and changes in the global (US–Soviet) relationship provide it with an important new degree of flexibility in dealing with South Asia. While concern over the situation in Afghanistan provided an important backdrop for the warming of Indo-US relations in the past several years, this was not primarily a judgement made in response to the Soviet invasion. Rather, it was a recognition of the power realities in South Asia conceived more in regional than in global terms. As such, it could survive the reordering of US interests in South Asia that will take place in the 1990s. This policy focuses increasingly on economic matters where America's comparative advantage lies, and less on military tools.

The new degree of flexibility also permits the judgement of other issues more on their intrinsic merits than has been the case in the past. This is particularly important in the areas of non-proliferation and democracy/human rights. The United States has important interests in these 'low' policy areas and should forcefully pursue them as matters of both short- and long-term concern.

In both India and Pakistan the United States needs to act to rationalise its involvement in terms of its own interests, but also to act to secure such positions as have been gained in recent years that are consonant with a policy of modest but steady interest.<sup>20</sup> Ironically it has a certain amount of leeway for a brief time. The wind-down in Afghanistan, which has been slower than expected, has retarded, at least, the perception of the US declining interests in South Asia. It is time that the Americans should use well.

## NOTES

1. For a thoughtful statement see W. Howard Wriggins, 'The Range and Scope of US Interests in South Asia', in Lawrence Ziring (ed.), *The Subcontinent in World Politics: India, its Neighbours and the Great Powers* (New York: Praeger, 1978) pp. 217–29. Also useful is Manoj Joshi, 'South Asia and American Strategic Policy', in Robert M. Crunden, *et al.* (eds), *New Perspectives on America and South Asia* (Delhi: Chanakya, 1984) pp. 32ff. Contrasting approaches are represented by Peter Galbraith, *United States Security Interests in South Asia* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1984), and Anthony H. Cordesman, *US Strategic Interests in the India-Pakistan Military Balance* (New Delhi: The English Bookstore, 1988). A recent useful summary of the problem is provided by Shivaji Ganguly, *US Policy Toward South Asia* (Boulder, Col.: Westview, 1990), ch. 2.
2. For an interesting discussion of how the US has differed with India over the importance of the subcontinent (*inter alia*), see Raju Thomas, 'Security Relationships in Southern Asia', in *Asian Survey*, vol. 21, no. 7 (July 1981) pp. 689–709.
3. The scholarly community sometimes has similar thoughts of negating geography. Thus an emerging Saudi-Pakistani relationship is seen as offering the chance to put the US-Pakistan relationship '...on a new footing, i.e. taking it out of the subcontinent, where India has been, and is likely to remain, a major concern, and moving it to Southwest Asia...If this shift could be achieved, then official Washington will be free to offer a measure of political and military support to Pakistan' (Shirin Tahir-Kheli, *The United States and Pakistan: The Evolution of an Influence Relationship* (New York: Praeger, 1982) p. 160).
4. Monstrosity or not, the State Department is probably correct. A separate bureau for South Asia would not carry enough weight to gain ready access to top-level decision makers. Creating new organisational structures is a time-honoured means of dealing with symptoms rather than the fundamental problem.
5. For a useful overview of the shift in policy during the Reagan administration, see Paul Kreisberg, 'The United States, South Asia and American Interests', in *Journal of International Affairs*, vol. 43, no. 1 (Summer/Fall 1989) pp. 83–95.
6. See on this point Dieter Braun, 'Indien als Machtfaktor in Asien: neue Gewichtung', in *Aussenpolitik* (11/90) pp. 168–81.
7. For an in-depth analysis of the nuclear situation in South Asia, see the task force report *Nuclear Weapons and South Asian Security* (Washington, DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1988).
8. On this point, see an unpublished and as yet unattributable paper by Stephen Cohen.
9. For the purposes of this section, the Indian Ocean can be treated as an extension of the Gulf. We shall consider it later on its own merits.
10. See especially the persuasive article by Robert H. Johnson, 'The Persian Gulf in US Strategy: A Skeptical View', in *International Security*, vol. 14, no. 1 (Summer 1989) pp. 122–60.

11. See Bhabani Sen Gupta, 'India's Relations with the Gulf Countries', in Alvin Z. Rubinstein (ed.), *The Great Game: Rivalry in the Persian Gulf and South Asia* (New York: Praeger, 1983) pp. 148–75; Robert G. Wirsing, 'India and the Gulf', in *International Security in Southwest Asia* (New York: Praeger, 1984) pp. 107–39; and B. A. Robertson, 'South Asia and the Gulf Complex', in Barry Buzan and Gowher Rizvi (eds), *South Asian Insecurity and the Great Powers* (London: Macmillan, 1986) pp. 159–80. On Pakistan, see Suroosh Irfani, 'Pakistan's Perception of Peace, Security and the Economic Dimensions of Southwest Asia', in Noor A. Husain and Leo E. Rose (eds), *Pakistan-US Relations: Social, Political and Economic Factors* (Berkeley, Cal.: Institute of East Asian Studies, University of California, 1988).
12. Richard N. Haass of the National Security Council Staff provides a broad overview of the Bush administration's view of South Asia in 'United States Policy toward South Asia', an address to the Asia Society of Washington, DC, on 11 January, 1990.
13. Some of my views on this are set forth in Nicholas X. Rizopoulos (ed.), *Sea-changes: American Foreign Policy in a World Transformed* (New York: Council on Foreign Relations, 1990) pp. 59–70.
14. An interesting look at the naval potential of India can be found in the Congressional testimony of A. D. M. Trost. A. D. M. Trost appears to take a sanguine view of the potential for Indo-US naval cooperation.
15. See note 4, above. Note also that there is an important basis for cooperation, e.g. on Kashmir, well short of condominium.
16. 'South Asia', in Robert S. Litwak and Samuel F. Wells, Jr (eds), *Superpower Competition and Security in the Third World* (Cambridge, Mass.: Ballinger, 1987) pp. 176–7.
17. See Jessica Tuchman Mathews, 'Redefining Security', in *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 68, no. 2 (Spring 1989) pp. 162–77.
18. For a general discussion of this problem see my *The Challenge to US Policy in the Third World: Global Responsibilities and Regional Devolution* (Boulder, Col.: Westview Press, 1986). South Asia is specifically discussed on pp. 69ff. and 140ff.
19. For the implications of this reordering for Pakistan, see Thomas P. Thornton, 'The New Phase in US-Pakistani Relations', in *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 68, no. 3 (Summer 1989) pp. 142–59.
20. Kreisberg ('The United States, South Asia and American Interests', p. 91) notes tellingly: '...although America's future agenda of interests in the region seems increasingly destined to focus on India as the centerpiece on which policymakers would have to devote their prime attention...Pakistan continues to be the center of Washington's immediate agenda. ...'

# 3 Soviet–Indian Relations: History and Perspectives

V. Ya. Belokrënitsky

It is clear that the issue of security in South Asia is closely linked with the whole set of complex relations of countries belonging to this region with other states and big powers situated quite near or at a distance of thousands of kilometers. In the not-so-distant past, conditions of the bipolar world, with antagonism between two superpowers, determined the security situation in the region to a considerable extent. In the ongoing process of transformation from a bipolar to a multipolar world system, there appear new problems and approaches.

This new context supposes a possible differentiation of the previous monolithic political–economic military complex of relationships into several horizons or tiers, linked with each other rather more flexibly. More than that, there is a possibility of evolving new modes of relations between regional states and superregional or metaregional powers. However, the history of relations which were moulded in the past context is not without interest and may serve as a guide for the evaluation of future trends.

Against this background, an attempt is made here to assess the history of relations between the biggest power in South Asia and one of the superpowers of the epoch of the bipolar world. First, political relations are highlighted, singling out their main stages; then an analysis of their economic ties is presented and, in conclusion, some remarks are made about the perspective of Soviet–Indian relations.

## POLITICAL TIES: PEAKS AND VALLEYS

Relations between two countries have deep historical roots. In Russia, the public began to show an interest in India from the middle of the nineteenth century. By the beginning of the present century it had evolved a feeling of genuine respect for traditional Indian culture and religion, and also deep sympathy for its people, since India was under colonial rule. The formation of public opinion and modern political movements in India generated strong sentiments of sympathy in the Russian state, which was the rival of India's colonial master, the British Empire. After the Russian

Revolution, in October 1917, a fraction of Indian political forces expressed its sympathy for the new socialist regime and reflected prosocialist thinking, which began to spread widely.

First diplomatic contacts between the two countries were established even before India gained her independence in 1947. But during the first year of independence India's relations with the USSR were complicated. The leadership of the Soviet Union, headed by Joseph Stalin, viewed the world as divided into two hostile competing camps. One can easily remember that the 'Cold War' began almost simultaneously with the victory of the liberation movement in India and the formation of two dominions on territory that was formerly a part of the British Empire. This development was viewed in Moscow most sceptically.

The opposition movement started by India's leftist forces culminated in a local rebellion in Telingana in 1948-9. Despite the negative influence of this rebellion, the Soviet Union maintained normal diplomatic relations with India. At the same time, however, it viewed this development almost exclusively in the context of its relations with former allies in the Anti-Hitler coalition, and current rivals in the Cold War. The logic of the Cold War motivated the Soviet Union to adopt a special diplomatic posture in the midst of the Kashmir crisis of 1948-9 (which sheds light on the detached Soviet attitude towards India and Pakistan), while using the situation mainly in propaganda terms primarily for accusations against Britain and the United States.

A turn towards better relations between India and the Soviet Union occurred during the last stage of the Korean War (1950-52). With the death of Stalin in 1953 changes in Soviet foreign policy took place. The new Soviet leadership refused to see the world as divided sharply into two conflicting blocs, and accepted the existence of the Third World of neutral or non-aligned nations. India's attitude towards the American role in the Korean War was also taken into account, as well as a shift in Pakistan's foreign policy, which created an alliance with the United States. This change in Pakistan's policy, together with a similar orientation of foreign policy in Turkey, Iran and Iraq, posed a threat to the southern borders of the USSR. This threat had in fact appeared in 1954 under the name of the Baghdad Pact, subsequently renamed CENTO (Central Treaty Organization).

In this atmosphere, better relations with India were viewed by the Soviet Union as a balancing factor. A good relationship with the USSR seemed to play the same role for India, which claimed one of the leading positions in the non-aligned movement. The first peak in bilateral Soviet-Indian relations was attained in 1955. In that spring, Jawaharlal Nehru paid a visit to the USSR, and in December Soviet leaders, Nikita

S. Khrushchev and Nikolai A. Bulganin, visited India. The cool relations were replaced by warm relations during the next year (1956). This phase of warm relationship was a byproduct of two international events – a popular uprising in Hungary, and the Anglo–French–Israeli war against Egypt. The policies and actions of the USSR and the USA in connection with these two events moved India closer to a balanced relationship with the Great Powers, and especially to improved Indian–American relations and moderate growth of Indian ties with the Soviet Union.

The relations of India with the USSR at that time came to be influenced by the Chinese factor. The ideological proximity of the Soviet Union and China did not present an obstacle to good relations with India so long as the relationship between the two Asian giants remained sufficiently close and friendly. With a worsening of these relations in the second half of the 1950s, the Soviet leadership was confronted with a choice. Initially it took a pro-Chinese stand. But as a result of the deterioration of Sino-Soviet relations a kind of equilibrium was once more achieved. In general the whole period from 1956 to 1964 may be characterised as being one of balanced but less intensive Soviet–Indian relations in comparison with the peak reached in 1955. Even during this period, there were moments of better understanding when, for example, the Soviet Union supported India's action of liberating Portuguese colonies. The Soviet stand during the Sino-Indian conflict of 1962 was balanced and, indeed, sympathetic to India if we take into consideration the still important factor of China having a common Communist ideology with the Soviet Union. During all these years economic and cultural ties between the two countries were growing, although the growth rate could have been higher.

By the middle of the 1960s, a certain equilibrium characterised Soviet–Indian relations, and relations between the USSR and Pakistan. After Nehru's death and Khrushchev's resignation, the new Soviet leadership came to a conclusion that there were no social or ideological differences between the biggest South Asian states, and that the Soviet attitude towards them should be one of complete neutrality. This was reflected in establishing rather intensive high-level contacts with Pakistan, including in particular, Pakistan's President Ayub Khan's visit to Moscow in the spring of 1965.

In autumn of that year, the Soviet Union offered its services as a mediator in an attempt to reconcile the positions of India and Pakistan, and to put an end to the armed conflict between them. The Soviet Union offered to host a meeting of the leaders of India and Pakistan. As is well known, the summit talks in Tashkent, in which Soviet Prime Minister Alexei N. Kosygin took an active part, led finally to the signing of the Tashkent Declaration and helped to ease tensions in South Asia. At the

same time, those talks proved that the Soviet Union did not have any special relationship with India, and in this sense 1965 and 1966 may be regarded as a valley in the history of Soviet-Indian relations.

The second half of the 1960s was marked by a smooth growth of bilateral relations which was especially invigorated by the Soviet role as a supplier of modern military equipment to the Indian armed forces. Simultaneously, the Soviets agreed to supply military equipment to Pakistan, but in quantities quite small when compared with the magnitude of supplies to India. The enhanced arms race, which started in the subcontinent with Pakistan turning to Western sources of armament, as the first signal of impending disequilibrium in Soviet relations with major South Asian states. However, the USSR tried to maintain a semblance of balance, promoting economic and cultural ties with Pakistan. However, the scope of such relations with India remained much bigger.

After the fall of Ayub Khan's government in Pakistan and the strengthening of Indira Gandhi's position in India, Soviet attitudes towards the countries of the subcontinent became more unbalanced. It should also be kept in mind that Soviet-Chinese relations reached their all-time low at this time, and this made relations with India more important in the eyes of the Soviet leadership. The Soviet policy was not one of equidistance in the events of 1971 in the subcontinent, which culminated in the Indo-Pakistan war, the capitulation of the Pakistani Army in East Pakistan, and the formation of Bangladesh. In August 1971 a Soviet-Indian Treaty of Peace, Friendship and Cooperation was signed in Moscow and this symbolised a new peak in Soviet-Indian political relations.

Then came a period of scaling down. This process was paralleled by an intensification of Soviet-Pakistan contacts, including Z. A. Bhutto's visits to Moscow in 1972 and 1974, and growing economic cooperation with Pakistan. A certain cooling in Soviet-Indian bilateral relations coincided with Soviet attempts to improve relations with China and concentration on European affairs. This trend became even more pronounced after the failure of the Indian National Congress at the parliamentary elections of 1977, and the formation of the Janata Party Administration up to 1979.

During this new period there appeared certain developments that advanced Soviet-Indian relations, including the right-wing military coup in Pakistan, the revolution of 1978-9 in Iran and the strengthening of the Islamic factor, which diminished India's influence in the Third World. Events in Afghanistan should be singled out as causing a turn for the worse in the relations between the United States and the Soviet Union. The beginning of a new rise in relationships between India and the USSR was manifested by the signing of the long-term programme for economic,

trade, scientific and technical cooperation at the end of 1979, emphasised by Leonid I. Brezhnev's visit to India in 1980. A new peak, the third one, was achieved in 1986–8, when the high-level visits of Mikhail S. Gorbachev to India and Rajiv Gandhi to the USSR took place; and grand friendship festivals in both countries were arranged. The peak years have been followed by a new fourth period of comparatively stable relations. Recently, the rate of progress has slowed down.

### **ECONOMIC TIES: GROWTH AND ACCELERATION**

The history of Soviet–Indian economic cooperation and trade can also be divided into several periods, but the general trend was one of unabated growth. The first period (1947–55) is characterised by an extremely low, insignificant volume of trade, and a complete absence of economic cooperation. In 1956–66 cooperation had begun, including the Soviet techno-economic and financial aid in the construction of Bhilai steel plant, a heavy mechanical complex in Ranchi, and a coal-mine equipment factory in Durgapur. These years are remarkable from the point of view of economic strategy, as India tried most earnestly to implement the Soviet model of industrialisation, which gives priority to heavy industries and production of capital goods. This strategy led also to the growth of the public sector in the Indian economy and Soviet help was rendered almost exclusively to public-sector enterprises and the establishing of state-owned corporations. After the severe drought of 1966–7, which caused famine in certain parts of India and resulted in economic stagnation, more attention was given to agriculture and the 'green revolution' was started.

During the third period (1967–79) Soviet cooperation in the economic development of India moved to yet another sector: energy production. With Soviet help considerable oil deposits were prospected and oil production increased manyfold, so that India nowadays can meet about two-thirds of her oil requirements. The Soviet Union was helpful in constructing and providing equipment for a dozen coal mines and building Hydroelectric power stations, and oil refineries. Cooperation continued in the sphere of heavy industries. The expansion of Bhilai steel mills and construction of the second steel plant in Bokaro brought the combined capacity of the steel sector to 8 million tons. New projects appeared in machine building, the biggest among them was a heavy electrical complex in Hardvar. All in all, by the end of the 1970s, approximately 50 projects of Indian–Soviet Cooperation had been completed and about 20 were under construction or being designed.



The last period followed the conclusion of the above-mentioned long-term programme in 1979; however, the bilateral agreement (1980) concerning economic and technical cooperation revealed both strong and weak points in economic relations. On the one hand, some new achievements are worth mentioning – the construction of the third metallurgical complex in Vizakhapatnam, an aluminum plant in Korba, and a third oil refinery in Mathura. On the other, Indo-Soviet cooperation, concentrated mainly in the traditional spheres, began to slacken. In 1983–9 only four new projects had been completed and the main emphasis in cooperation shifted to the military-equipment industry, mainly because of growing difficulties in the Soviet economy. Ambitious plans for increasing Soviet-Indian trade and economic cooperation, worked out during Gorbachev's 1986 visit to India, remain to a considerable extent unfulfilled.

Trade relations, having their own dynamics, reflected and followed the course of economic cooperation between the two countries. The major item of Soviet export was industrial equipment – capital goods supplied for the projects under construction with Soviet technical and financial aid. In the 1970s and 1980s, import of oil from the USSR became an important and steadily growing item. Exchange of goods was carried out with the help of bilateral agreements. The basic rate of exchange of the Indian rupee and Soviet rouble was fixed in a Protocol signed in 1978. Twelve years later India was pressing hard to alter the exchange rate.

The volume of trade, being negligible in 1947, grew to 10.6 million roubles by 1955, jumped to 346 million in 1966 and increased two-fold in the next ten years. By 1981 it had reached 2.4 billion roubles and, since that year, stagnated at the level of 2.1–2.3 billion. (According to the official exchange rate US \$1 was equal to rouble 0.6–0.7.) The proportion of trade with India in overall Soviet trade was fairly stable from the middle of the 1960s, oscillating near the 2 per cent mark. The maximum was reached in 1985 and the minimum in 1976 and 1979. Over the same period the Soviet Union gradually became an important trade partner with India. In the 1980s she exported quite a wide range of ready-made goods to Soviet markets, reaching annually about US \$2 billions in value.

## LATEST TRENDS AND FORECASTS

It seems that the third peak in Soviet-Indian relations has already passed and a new smooth decline has begun in both political and economic fields. In the political sphere the Soviet role itself is changing as a result of

adopting an ideology of new political thinking and rejecting obligations originating from the USSR's former function as a pole in the world bipolar military-political system. As a result of this change, we can expect less interest in the events taking place in rather distant and separated areas of South Asia. Evidently this will not lead to total lack of interest in the region and particularly in India. Even when confronted with a deep crisis in her economy and multiple challenges in the political field, the Soviet Union would not cease to be a mighty power having a wide range of foreign-policy obligations and interests. For this reason, and in accordance with aims derived from the philosophy of new political thinking, the USSR would remain interested in supporting and promoting security and peace in South Asia. She is not in any way interested in generating tensions in the South Asian subcontinent and is watching with concern developments around Kashmir.

The positions of the USSR and India on major international issues are mostly close or similar, and one can safely predict that this will remain so in future.

Prospects for economic cooperation in the very near future seem to be not so bright. The Soviet economy is embarked upon the road to thorough reconstruction. Some elements of economic mechanism which were instrumental in promoting Soviet-Indian cooperation may suffer. In general, this cooperation is most probably on the eve of some qualitative change. The pursuit of expanding production capacities may give way to seeking less capital-intensive, more economically feasible projects and avenues of cooperation. Simultaneously, there might occur a shift from state-sector interaction to cooperation between private firms, cooperatives and joint-stock companies. Effective economic cooperation would almost automatically bring the growth of informal social and cultural contacts. Bilateral cooperation would probably be supplemented by extensive cooperation on a multilateral basis with different South Asian states. This approach by itself would promote the cause of security and peace in the region.

## NOTE

1. This chapter is based on the articles published in Russian in Yearbooks on India and authored by V. N. Koptevsky, *India in 1981-1982* (Moscow, 1983) pp. 15-27 and *India in 1983* (Moscow, 1985) pp. 17-29; and A. I. Fialkovsky, *India in 1983*, pp. 94-105; and also upon an earlier article by M. N. Stasov, *The Economy of Modern India* (Moscow, 1972) in Russian,

pp. 58-67. The latest development is analysed by G. Ivashentsev, *Mejdunarodnaja Jizn*, International Affairs (Moscow, Russian Edition, 1990) pp. 61-8. Statistical data is taken from the Yearbooks, *The USSR Foreign Trade*.

# 4 Soviet Foreign Policy's Emerging Role in South Asia following Withdrawal from Afghanistan

Melvin Goodman

The USSR's decision in 1988 to withdraw its military forces from Afghanistan marked the Kremlin's acknowledgement that it could not suppress the insurgency, establish a government that could win even grudging support from the 'mujahideen', and form an Afghan military force that could battle the resistance throughout the entire country. The Soviet withdrawal also acknowledged that the military presence in Afghanistan was a major obstacle to Moscow's long-term regional objectives in South and Southwest Asia and could even leave a permanent scar on Soviet relations in the area generally. General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev presumably believed that complete Soviet withdrawal would not only remove an irritant in Soviet relations with India – the key to Moscow's position in the region – but could open opportunities for improved Soviet relations with both Pakistan and Iran.

Significant changes in the international environment have improved Moscow's position in South Asia, raising hopes in the Kremlin for improving bilateral ties throughout the region. In addition to their own withdrawal from Afghanistan, the Soviets have significantly improved ties with the United States and China, which increasingly isolates Pakistan in the region. The Iraqi invasion of Kuwait and the US buildup of military forces in the Persian Gulf have made the Soviet Union more attractive to all of the conservative Persian Gulf states as well as to Iran. India's efforts to remain a regional superpower continue to call for a certain amount of military and economic dependence on the Soviet Union, but Moscow's economic and military problems in the near term will leave room for less financial assistance for regional states.

## THE SOVIET INVASION AND THE IMPACT ON SOUTH AND SOUTHWEST ASIA

Most Third World states, while physically and psychologically far removed from Afghanistan, were negatively impressed by the brutality of the Soviet takeover of Afghanistan in 1979 – particularly the execution of Prime Minister Hafizullah Amin.<sup>1</sup> The prolonged and ruthless Soviet effort to destroy the Islamic insurgency in Afghanistan had continuing repercussions on the perceptions of the key Islamic states in the Middle East and South Asia. Even Soviet clients, particularly those that had accommodated a Soviet military presence and concluded a friendship treaty with the USSR, presumably had doubts about the desirability and risks of their involvement with Moscow.<sup>2</sup> And the states bordering the USSR and Afghanistan, specifically Iran and Pakistan, clearly were suspicious of future Soviet objectives with respect to the region.

### **Impact on Immediate Neighbours: Iran**

The Soviet presence in Afghanistan was a major source of friction in Soviet–Iranian relations, hampering dialogue and feeding mutual suspicions. The Shah opposed the Communist takeover in Kabul in April 1978, and the Khomeini regime consistently condemned both the Soviet intervention of December 1979 and its presence in the 1980s. Iran eventually took in over two million Afghan refugees and called for an Islamic solution in Afghanistan and a Soviet withdrawal. Tehran voiced strong support for the insurgents, permitted insurgent groups to operate from Iranian territory, and – according to Soviet commentary – trained and equipped some of these groups.

Until the departure of the late Andrei Gromyko in 1985 as Soviet foreign minister, Soviet media frequently criticised Iran's attitude and argued that the insurgency was a creature of the United States, which was alleged to be simultaneously supporting counterrevolution in Iran. In May 1983, for the first time, the government newspaper *Izvestia* charged that Iran was allowing insurgents to use its territory as a base for operations.<sup>3</sup> An *Izvestia* article in July contained a more detailed indictment of Iranian support for the insurgents and claimed that these activities had been steadily increasing.<sup>4</sup>

At the outset of the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan, Moscow responded to its perceptions of Iran's activity on behalf of the mujahideen by stepping up its own military operations on the Afghan–Iranian border. A major incursion of Soviet forces into Iranian territory occurred in April 1982, the same month that Moscow signed an arms agreement with Iraq

and a month after an article in *Pravda* revealed Soviet frustration with Iran.<sup>5</sup> While the incursion itself may have been inadvertent, the Soviet willingness to operate in close proximity to the border and risk antagonising Tehran revealed an increasing sensitivity to the actions of Iranian-supported insurgents and a decreasing concern about potential damage to bilateral relations.

Prior to the invasion of Afghanistan, the Soviets had used the crisis in US–Iranian relations to strengthen their ties to the Khomeini regime and to improve their image as a defender of ‘anti-imperialist’ revolutionary causes. Bilateral ties never became close, and the invasion and occupation aroused latent anti-Sovietism in Iran’s new leadership and triggered a protracted deterioration in relations. Not even Moscow’s unwillingness to honour its arms agreements with Iraq in the first two years of the Iran–Iraq war persuaded Tehran to seek better bilateral relations with the Soviets.

Iran’s circumspection toward Moscow is part of the legacy of Tehran’s awareness of the history of Soviet intervention in Iran in this century. In 1920 Soviet forces occupied Gilan – the northernmost province of Persia – in an effort to rid the area of British forces. The following year, however, when Soviet policy shifted from active promotion of revolution to collaboration with national governments, the Soviets withdrew their forces. During the Second World War, the Soviets occupied all of northern Iran and, along with British forces, secured Iran and the Persian Gulf corridor as an important supply line to the USSR. The Azerbaijan Democratic Republic was formed in 1945 with Soviet support, but heavy pressure from both the United States and the United Kingdom compelled Soviet forces to withdraw the following year. The Azerbaijan Democratic Republic collapsed when Iranian troops reentered the area on the pretext of supervising national elections.

The Soviets invoked the 1921 Russian–Persian Treaty to justify their occupation of Iran during the Second World War, and they would undoubtedly cite it again if they elected to intervene militarily.<sup>6</sup> Article six of that agreement gives the USSR the right to introduce troops into Iran if a third party should try to carry out a policy of usurpation through armed intervention in Persia or should seek to use Persian territory as a base for operations against the Soviet Union. The article provides, however, that the Soviets would withdraw such troops when the danger to the USSR was removed. (Article five of the treaty commits both sides to prevent the presence on their territory of forces or organisations that might be regarded as a menace to the other side.)

Immediately after the seizure of the United States embassy in Tehran in November 1979, the Iranian government announced the unilateral

abrogation of articles five and six of the treaty. The Soviets have not formally responded to the Iranian action, but Moscow's continuing public affirmation of articles five and six provides the USSR with a plausible rationale should it choose to intervene militarily in Iran.

The Soviets could persuade themselves of the need to take military action against Iran in order to preempt or respond to US military action, in response to a request from a leftist government, or in reaction to fragmentation within Iran. There are substantial incentives for such a move – access to energy resources, the ability to pressure the Gulf states, the control of security problems on its border, or the means to end Iran's aid to the Afghan insurgents. But the disincentives are more impressive – the possibility of confrontation with the United States and European members of NATO, the problems of occupying and pacifying Iran, the promotion of US–West European–Chinese cohesion. In any event, the Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan points to fewer possibilities for confrontation between the Soviet Union and Iran and provides additional opportunities for improved bilateral relations, which both sides appear anxious to pursue.

### **Impact on Immediate Neighbours: Pakistan**

Moscow's policy in Afghanistan seriously undermined its relations with Pakistan, which used the ten years following the coup to move closer to both the United States and China. Pakistan has provided refuge to more than three million Afghan refugees, served as the main staging area for insurgent operations, and moved to the forefront of those Islamic nations demanding the withdrawal of Soviet forces, particularly after Iraq's invasion of Iran in 1980 meant a lesser role by Baghdad on behalf of the mujahideen. The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan worsened Pakistan's national security situation and increased Islamabad's fear of the USSR; the Soviets in turn tried to play on this fear, as well as on Pakistan's internal difficulties, to pull that country into accommodation with the new Afghan regime. Soviet overflights of Pakistani territory, as well as occasional bombing operations against mujahideen camps in western Pakistan, never threatened the Islamabad regime or Pakistani security, but certainly created problems for Pakistani national security decision making as well as bureaucratic differences within Islamabad on military support to the mujahideen.

During the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan, from 1979 to 1989, the Soviets unsuccessfully combined blandishment and pressure to encourage Pakistan to limit assistance to the Afghan insurgents. Both political and

military pressure was used to persuade Islamabad that it was 'not too late' to cease all aid to the rebels, but at the same time Moscow actually increased economic assistance to Pakistan notwithstanding Islamabad's persistent refusal to consider a settlement to the Afghan problem without an early withdrawal of Soviet forces.

Soviet pressure tactics were designed to take advantage of the weak central authority that existed in Pakistan during the period of Soviet occupation of Afghanistan, which culminated with the death of President Mohammed Zia ul-Haq in 1988. Soviet commentary had implied that Pakistan's security position would be difficult if it did not stop supporting the insurgency, and the apparent explosion on Zia's aircraft fostered various conspiracy theories to include Soviet or Afghan involvement. The USSR had also threatened to exercise 'hot pursuit' against the Afghan rebels, and there were numerous reports of violations of Pakistani airspace and bombing of refugee camps by Soviet and Afghan aircraft. Various Soviet commentaries and propaganda broadcasts supported anti-regime elements within Pakistan, particularly the Movement for Restoration of Democracy.

Despite accusations to the contrary, there was no credible evidence that Moscow's intimidation tactics included a campaign to heat up the issue of an independent Pushtunistan or to encourage the ambitions of such anti-Pakistani tribal groups as the Baluchis.<sup>7</sup> Pakistani Baluchistan has been in periodic rebellion against the central government for decades, and some Baluchis are probably willing to probe for signs of Soviet willingness to support their efforts to secure an independent Baluchistan. There was even the more far-fetched concern that the Soviets would exploit their presence in Afghanistan to try to acquire a port on the Indian Ocean at some Baluchi harbour like Gwadar. In any event, the Soviet presence in Afghanistan significantly increased the tensions between Afghanistan and Pakistan which will have to be addressed in the wake of the Soviet withdrawal and could provide the Soviets with some regional leverage in the post-withdrawal period.

### **Impact on Additional Neighbours: India**

India has long been one of the most important targets of Soviet attention in the Third World, both as a partner in containing China and as a cornerstone of Soviet influence with the nonaligned movement, and Moscow was careful to make sure that its presence in Afghanistan would never become more than a minor irritant in Soviet-Indian relations. The return of Indira Gandhi to power before the Soviet invasion of



Afghanistan was reassuring to the Soviets who were confident of her continued interest in close ties with the Soviet Union and opposition to policies of the United States. The Soviets scheduled a series of high-level visits to India in the 1980s, including the late Defense Minister Dmitri Ustinov in 1984 and Marshal Sergei Sokolov in 1986, to display the Kremlin's interest in protecting its New Delhi connection, and continued large-scale shipments of Soviet military equipment. Indian dependence on the Soviet Union for both economic and military aid was considerable during this period, matching the record levels of US deliveries of military assistance to Pakistan, which reinforced Soviet influence in New Delhi. Although never completely comfortable with the Soviet military presence in Afghanistan, India muted its criticism.

India always has been far more sensitive to any signs of change in United States–Pakistan relations as a result of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan than in the Soviet occupation itself. India has consistently opposed greater superpower involvement in South and Southwest Asia and is particularly concerned that significant US arms sales to Pakistan, including sophisticated F-16 fighter aircraft, would increase prospects for regional instability and conflict. Thus, Indian media remained almost silent with regard to the Soviet military presence in Afghanistan, but expressed consistent opposition to US arms deliveries to Islamabad and their potential use against India. Moscow played to this concern by highlighting US sales of 'sophisticated' arms to Islamabad and by charging Pakistan with a buildup of forces on the Indian border and the exacerbation of tension along the border. In fact, there was no evidence of increased Pakistani deployments on its western border with Afghanistan during the Soviet occupation of its neighbour, and ample evidence of an increased Pakistani military presence on its eastern border with India.

During the period of the Soviet military presence in Afghanistan, India was concerned with the increased Soviet pressure on Pakistan that could threaten the status of Islamabad as a buffer between the USSR and India. Presumably the Soviet leadership was well aware of this Indian view and shared New Delhi's belief that Soviet–Indian relations were best served by some distance between Soviet and Indian forces. Additionally, India remains convinced that, over the long run, Pakistan should be preoccupied with the possible threat from India and not a major threat from the Soviet Union, which would lead to some loss of leverage for India in Pakistani national security decision making. In other words, any Soviet presence at the Khyber Pass would be worrisome to India as well as to Pakistan, and presumably would lead some elements of the Indian political elite to explore alternatives to dependence on the Soviet Union.

Although Indian concerns with the Soviet military presence in Afghanistan did not drive New Delhi into the arms of the United States, it was noteworthy during the period of Soviet occupation that the Rajiv Gandhi government did try to improve the political dialogue with both the United States and the People's Republic of China. The Soviet presence in Afghanistan, as well as the increased superpower involvement in the Indian Ocean, also appeared to convince Rajiv Gandhi of the importance of reducing tensions with both Pakistan and Bangladesh. As a result, in 1988, Gandhi made his first trips to both China and Pakistan. Finally, the Indians have made fewer public references to their friendship and cooperation treaty with the USSR, which was signed in 1971, perhaps as a result of the Soviet Union's use of a similar treaty with Afghanistan to justify the invasion in 1979.

### **Impact on the Islamic Community**

The Islamic community was virtually unanimous in its opposition to the Soviet presence in Afghanistan, with Soviet relations with Iran, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, and the conservative states of the Persian Gulf becoming more difficult. Most Arab states either signed the initial request for an urgent Security Council meeting to condemn the Soviet presence or expressed official indignation in some other form. Each year for nearly ten years the Islamic Conference Organisation condemned the Soviet presence in Afghanistan and demanded the unconditional withdrawal of Soviet forces.

Only Libya, South Yemen, and Syria – all of which are heavily dependent on the USSR for military assistance – refused to support these resolutions; only South Yemen and Syria recognised the government in Kabul before the Soviet withdrawal in 1989. Syria's isolation, unpopular involvement in Lebanon, and dependence on Soviet military support tempered its reaction to Afghanistan. Libya's preoccupation with the US 'threat' offset what might have been a natural empathy for the Islamic insurgents in Afghanistan. The war between Iran and Iraq forced Baghdad to moderate its opposition to the Soviets, although the invasion reinforced Iraq's mistrust of Moscow and further strained an already cool relationship.

Moscow's oppression of Islamic forces in Afghanistan certainly reinforced fears of communism in the region and did considerable damage to the image of the USSR. The invasion and occupation also drew international attention to the drama in Southwest Asia, thereby distracting some attention from the Arab-Israeli conflict. A considerable number of conservative Arab states, particularly Saudi Arabia, contributed hard

currency and military assistance to the mujahideen, which meant that the Soviet decision to invade Afghanistan created an 'alliance' between the United States, China, Israel, Egypt, and various conservative Persian Gulf states against the interests of Moscow.<sup>8</sup>

Saudi Arabia believed that the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan was designed in part to encircle the conservative oil producing nations of the Persian Gulf and to gain access to oil. For the Saudis, this was the essential explanation for Soviet activities in Ethiopia, South Yemen, and North Yemen, and for the Soviet readiness to take advantage of discord in Iran. The war on the Horn of Africa in 1977, the Camp David dialogue in 1978, the ousting of the Shah in 1979, and the seizure of the Grand Mosque in the early 1980s had added to Riyadh's anxiety about the instability in the region of Southwest Asia and the Persian Gulf.

Moscow presumably realised that the invasion of Afghanistan marked a major setback in its efforts to reestablish diplomatic relations with Saudi Arabia, which were broken in the late 1930s. Since the Arab-Israeli war in October 1973, the Soviets have frequently signalled a willingness to resume a diplomatic dialogue, but the Saudis have rebuffed these efforts until recently. Both *Pravda* and *Izvestia* have emphasised that the USSR and Saudi Arabia have never had any 'irreconcilable' conflicts, and Soviet press commentaries occasionally contain long and sympathetic accounts of Saudi policies, and often play upon Saudi disenchantment with the Camp David accord.<sup>9</sup> (In 1988, the Soviets and Saudis exchanged high-level diplomatic visits for the first time in fifty years, and in 1990 they resumed diplomatic relations.)

The Afghan invasion clearly set back whatever hopes the Kremlin may have had during the Brezhnev era about establishing diplomatic and commercial relations with Saudi Arabia. Moscow presumably was not surprised at Saudi Arabia's vehemently hostile response to the invasion, including Riyadh's willingness to strengthen its security relationship with the United States over military assistance to the Contras and hostage rescue efforts with Iran. The Soviets probably did not anticipate, however, Saudi ingenuity in organising the Islamic Conferences which condemned the USSR, called for assistance to the insurgents, and stamped the regime in Kabul as unacceptable. As a result, Riyadh became a far more competent opponent of Soviet interests, more willing to counter the spread of Soviet-supported radical regimes in the Arabian peninsula and more anxious to cement a 'special relationship' with the United States. Soviet concern was reflected in Moscow's frequently expressed view that the United States was seeking to create a new alliance including Pakistan and the conservative Gulf states.<sup>10</sup>

## THE EFFECT OF SOVIET WITHDRAWAL FROM AFGHANISTAN ON POLICY IN SOUTH ASIA AND SOUTHWEST ASIA

The decision to withdraw from Afghanistan was taken by a Politburo that no longer included such supporters of the invasion as Leonid Brezhnev, Yuri Andropov, and Dmitri Ustinov. At the 27th Party Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union in 1986, Gorbachev stressed that Moscow 'would like in the nearest future to bring the Soviet forces ... back to their homeland' and that a 'schedule has been worked out with the Afghan side for a step-by-step withdrawal'.<sup>11</sup> This marked the first time that any Soviet leader had indicated that Moscow had a plan for a phased pullout of Soviet forces. Several weeks before Gorbachev's remarks, two high-ranking members of the International Department indicated that the Soviets wanted to withdraw from Afghanistan as soon as possible. Following the party congress, then politburo member Geydar Aliyev and First Deputy Foreign Minister Korniyenko endorsed Gorbachev's remarks. Thus, as early as 1986, it appeared that Gorbachev had achieved a consensus within the Politburo for the beginning of withdrawal from Afghanistan.

The beginning of friction between the Soviet and Afghan regimes on the issue of a troop withdrawal and the political nature of the Kabul government also indicated that a Soviet decision to reduce forces had been broached and the Afghans were resisting. No Soviet leader met with Babrak Karmal during the Soviet party congress in February and March 1986, and Karmal's speech to the congress made no mention of a possible Soviet withdrawal. Soviet messages to the Afghans on National Day began to drop customary references to the 'leading role' of the ruling People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan or to Moscow's 'revolutionary solidarity' with Kabul.

Two years later, on 8 February 1988, Gorbachev announced the first specific date for a troop withdrawal and offered several important new concessions – a reduction in the proposed pullout schedule by two months and a stated willingness to remove a large number of troops in the early stages of the withdrawal regardless of whether the Afghans managed to reach an interim agreement with Pakistan. High-level Soviet negotiators began to meet for the first time with Afghan guerrilla leaders, and indirect talks between Kabul and Islamabad were resumed in Geneva with US and Soviet delegations standing by. Undoubtedly, Gorbachev's ability to use his first three years of leadership to revamp virtually the entire Politburo and Defence Council had contributed significantly to his success in arranging for a Soviet troop withdrawal from Afghanistan, which was completed on schedule in February 1989.

**Impact on Immediate Neighbours: Iran**

Since the Islamic revolution, Soviet relations with Iran have been fundamentally strained by the mullahs' antipathy for communism and Iranian distrust of its powerful neighbour. The Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan, the end to the Iran–Iraq war, and the death of Ayatollah Khomeini in June 1989, began to ameliorate Soviet–Iranian differences over Iran's support for the Afghan insurgents, Soviet arms supplies to Iraq, and possibly Iranian suppression of indigenous leftist forces. The succession crisis in Iran continues to be unpredictable but the early emergence of Akbar Rafsanjani as president and the prompt appointment of Ali Khamenei as acting commander in chief of the armed forces suggested a setback for the radicals at the outset and some opportunity for improved Soviet–Iranian relations.

Rafsanjani and Khamenei are close personally and appear to agree on expanding relations with Western Europe and reducing friction with the Soviet Union. The responsibility for additional internal security measures for Interior Minister Abdollah Nuri also suggests greater stability for the post-Khomeini era. At the very least, there should be more coherence and consistency in Iranian foreign policy, thereby making it somewhat easier for the Kremlin to insinuate itself with the new leadership in Tehran.

Gorbachev's patience during the worst of Khomeini's anti-Soviet activities – stopping the shipment of natural gas, closing the Soviet consulate at Rasht, expelling Soviet embassy personnel – could also pay dividends in the near term. Ever since Andrei Gromyko's elevation to the Soviet presidency in July 1985 and the emergence of Eduard Shevardnadze as foreign minister, Soviet policy toward Iran has been more pragmatic and flexible. The following year, Soviet First Deputy Foreign Minister Georgi Korniyenko visited Tehran, marking the highest-level Soviet official to visit Iran since the revolution. Soviet Prime Minister Nikolai Ryzhkov received Iranian Oil Minister Aqazadeh in the summer of 1986, which led to the resumption of natural gas shipments to the USSR.<sup>12</sup> The resumption of natural gas deliveries led to the signing of an economic cooperation agreement, in December 1986, which called for the construction of steel plants and power stations in Iran and the return of Soviet technicians to Iran.

In view of the substantial differences between the USSR and Iran, it is unlikely that relations could become very close in the near future. Nevertheless, the Soviets for the past several years have been manoeuvring themselves for the post-Khomeini era and Iran appears interested in stabilising the bilateral relationship. In early 1989, Khomeini

had written a somewhat conciliatory letter to Gorbachev – his only written message to a foreign leader – and later in the year Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani made his first state visit to Moscow. Khomeini's death had caused a postponement of the visit early in the month of June, but the trip was immediately rescheduled for later in the month. Rafsanjani's apparent haste in arranging the trip to Moscow was the strongest indication to date that Iran wanted to pursue more cordial relations with the Soviet Union and that the leadership in Tehran had decided to interpret Khomeini's will as an endorsement of improved relations with the USSR. The will, most of it written in 1982 and sealed in 1983, is critical of Soviet history and warns his heirs to remain 'independent of either the atheist East or the infidel oppressor West'.<sup>13</sup> At the same time, Khomeini called for 'cordial relations with those governments that are not intent on interference in the internal affairs of our country', which could provide the rationalisation for improved political and economic relations with the Soviet Union.

Rafsanjani's visit, which took place from 20 to 23 June 1989, marked a major step in the recent improvement in Soviet–Iranian bilateral relations. The two sides signed an economic reconstruction agreement on 22 June 1989 that would allow Tehran to purchase significant amounts of Soviet machinery, plants, and technology in return for Iranian deliveries of natural gas from the soon-to-be completed Kangan refinery on Iran's Persian Gulf coast near the Strait of Hormuz.<sup>14</sup> This marked the largest credit deal that Tehran had signed with a foreign government since the Islamic revolution in 1979, as well as a reversal in Tehran's policy of avoiding foreign involvement in Iran's rebuilding effort.

Gorbachev held two meetings with Rafsanjani and the joint communiqué that marked the visit described the sessions as being held in an atmosphere of 'mutual understanding' with a 'useful and constructive' exchange of views.<sup>15</sup> At the dinner that Gorbachev held for Rafsanjani on 21 June, the Iranian leader was even more sanguine than his Soviet counterpart in describing the nature of the current bilateral relationship and, upon return to Tehran, characterised the visit as 'absolutely positive'. Soviet commentary has been far more restrained, presumably in deference to the Iraqi government as well as to various conservative Arab states in the region that would look askance upon a genuine rapprochement between the Soviet Union and Iran.

Both sides played down the possibility of Soviet military sales or assistance to Iran, but Soviet sources stated that Moscow agreed to 'strengthen' Iran's 'defense capability'.<sup>16</sup> Gorbachev subsequently confirmed that arms sales to Iran were part of the Soviet Union's overall arms

policy and asserted that such sales did not conflict with efforts to secure a more peaceful international climate. The Soviets began delivering MiG-29s to Iran in 1990.<sup>17</sup>

Moscow and Tehran also stressed the progress in economic agreements which called for Soviet credits to Iran worth more than \$2 billion and Iranian repayment in natural gas deliveries. The exchange of visits between Shevardnadze and Rafsanjani in 1989 led to a number of agreements for economic cooperation, tourist exchanges, expanded cultural ties, and cross-border travel.

Soviet media have been reticent to discuss regional issues that were covered during the talks, but Rafsanjani noted that Moscow and Tehran were 'completely in unison' on the terms for a negotiated settlement of Iran's conflict with Iraq and in 'complete agreement' on the principles of an Afghan settlement.<sup>18</sup> Previous Soviet commentary indicated that Moscow was supportive of Iran's position on the settlement negotiations with Iraq, and the Soviet leadership has endorsed the proposal of the UN Secretary General on the Iran-Iraq conflict.

The following month, Shevardnadze visited Tehran for two days, ostensibly to enlist Tehran's support for the Soviet-backed regime in Afghanistan in a negotiated settlement.<sup>19</sup> Unlike the Rafsanjani visit to Moscow, on this occasion the two sides recorded their support for the cease-fire in Afghanistan and the establishment of an 'inter-Afghan dialogue' to establish a 'broad-based government'. Iran was less forthcoming in responding to Shevardnadze's request for assistance in releasing Soviet prisoners of war captured by Afghan insurgents.

Iran has its own reasons to be careful in tilting toward the USSR. Tehran will continue to need significant amounts of Western economic assistance to achieve its reconstructive objectives, as well as a Western political dialogue to avoid becoming isolated in the region. Indeed, Iranian media have indicated an interest in improving relations with the West and an editorial in the *Tehran Times*, that was timed to coincide with Rafsanjani's arrival in Moscow, warned against 'moving too fast' in improving relations with the USSR in order not to contradict the longstanding policy of 'neither East nor West'.<sup>20</sup>

There may be some limits on the amounts of military assistance that Moscow will provide. In addition to Soviet caution in discussing the nature of the bilateral relationship, Soviet political observer Aleksandr Bovin has questioned the wisdom of 'weapon sales' to Iran, arguing that in return for relatively minor short-term gains Moscow would, in the long term, be promoting 'instability' by 'continuing to pump weapons into the most restless region' in the world.<sup>21</sup> Nevertheless, Deputy Foreign

Minister Vladimir Petrovsky visited Tehran in November 1990 and described Soviet–Iranian relations as ‘rather close’.<sup>22</sup>

### **Impact on Immediate Neighbours: Pakistan**

Even before the invasion of Afghanistan, the Soviets found that their arms sales to India were a major obstacle to improved relations with Pakistan. The Soviets were neutral in the Indo-Pakistani war of 1965 and Premier Alexei Kosygin mediated the signing of the Tashkent agreement in 1966, but these developments did not lead to any significant improvement in Soviet–Pakistani relations. The Soviets offered economic assistance to Pakistan after the 1971 war over Bangladesh, but Islamabad continued to perceive the Soviet–Indian military relationship as a major security threat and, after the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, signed a six-year \$3.2 billion arms deal with the United States.<sup>23</sup> Continued Pakistani distrust of India and the Indo-Soviet military relationship led to the recent Pakistani request to purchase an additional 60 US F-16 fighter aircraft to supplement the 40 F-16s currently in the Pakistani inventory.<sup>24</sup> Congressional authorisation for the latest sale, however, will depend on congressional review of Pakistan’s nuclear programme.

Moscow’s withdrawal from Afghanistan leaves behind a Pakistan that is more closely aligned with the United States and China, more of a military threat in the region to its neighbours, and several steps closer to a nuclear capability. In testimony to the Senate Governmental Affairs Committee on 18 May 1989, William H. Webster, the Director of the Central Intelligence Agency, for the first time publicly addressed the issue of nuclear proliferation in South Asia. Webster noted that Pakistan was ‘engaged in developing a nuclear capability’ and added that the missile and atomic research programmes of Pakistan and India have ‘all the earmarks of a race’.<sup>25</sup> During her visit to the United States in June 1989, then Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto of Pakistan assured President George Bush that Islamabad was ‘not interested in making a nuclear device’ and favoured the signing of a nuclear test ban treaty ‘with other countries in the region’.<sup>26</sup>

The invasion of Afghanistan in 1979 was directly responsible for the reversal of the US decision to stop military deliveries to Islamabad in response to the latter’s nuclear weapons programme; during the period from 1979 to 1989 the United States actually extended more than \$3 billion in military and economic assistance to Pakistan. Moscow’s political and military threats against Pakistan during the period of Soviet occupation of Afghanistan, as well as Pakistani support for the Afghan



insurgency, were the major justifications for the extensions of US assistance.

The Soviet decision to withdraw from Afghanistan and the sudden death of Pakistani President Zia ul-Haq in 1988 presumably gave Moscow some reason to believe that a turning point had been reached in Soviet-Pakistani bilateral relations. However, Zia's immediate successors, Ghulam Ishaq Khan and Benazir Bhutto, shared Zia's opposition to the pro-Soviet regime in Kabul and the commitment to repatriate more than three million Afghan refugees present in Pakistan. She also made clear her intention to continue close ties with the United States and China, and travelled to both Beijing and Washington during her first year in office. Bhutto's distrust of India and the Soviet-Indian relationship led her to request additional US F-16 fighter aircraft, and the deal was completed in the summer of 1989.<sup>27</sup> Moscow then threatened that the delivery of F-16s could lead to Soviet transfer of MiG-29 fighter aircraft to Afghanistan along with other weapons systems that is thus far had refrained from supplying. Bhutto's successor, Nawaz Sharif, will probably return to Zia's policies.

Both sides have reasons for stabilising their relations, however. The USSR would favour an accommodation between Islamabad and the regime in Kabul and an end to military assistance to the mujahideen. Pakistan requires a stable relationship with the Soviet Union so that Islamabad can concentrate on its problems with India. Neither Moscow nor Islamabad would benefit from any deterioration in Soviet-Pakistani relations and both would have difficulties with the creation of a radical Islamic regime in Kabul. US-Pakistani differences over Pakistan's nuclear programmes could lead to Islamabad's interest in improving relations with Moscow. The recent improvements in diplomatic and economic relations between the Soviet Union and all the conservative Persian Gulf states could lead to Pakistan's interest in improving ties with Moscow as well.

A Soviet initiative to improve political relations is likely in the near term. Prior to the completion of withdrawal, Shevardnadze and Deputy Foreign Minister Vorontsov made separate visits to Pakistan. The two sides announced a major economic agreement in November 1989, with Moscow providing \$100 million to expand Pakistani steel mills. In the meantime, the two sides are in agreement on such tactical issues as avoiding controversial debates on Afghanistan at the United Nations, as well as any Pakistani dialogue with India, which was resumed in 1988 when Rajiv Gandhi became the first Indian prime minister to visit Pakistan in nearly thirty years.

**Impact on Immediate Neighbours: India**

The Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan will make it easier for Moscow to achieve its objectives toward India, which have remained essentially unchanged for two decades: a stable bilateral relationship regardless of the government in New Delhi; active cooperation against the alignment of the United States, China and Pakistan in South Asia; and the encouragement of Indian support for Soviet positions within the United Nations and the nonaligned movement. India's interest in maintaining its status as the major regional power in South Asia, as well as its memories of several wars with Pakistan over 40 years, provide some leverage for Moscow in encouraging support from the government in New Delhi. The Indo-Pakistan relationship improved in the wake of Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan, but the continued dispute over Kashmir, mutual concerns over the delivery of sophisticated arms from the United States and the Soviet Union, and, more recently, the use of foreign technology to develop ballistic missile programmes in both India and Pakistan, have limited the extent of cooperation that has been fostered between the two traditional rivals.

Soviet arms transfers were the key to Moscow's success in the Third World and this factor was particularly evident in the case of India. New Delhi not only received large amounts of such sophisticated weapons systems as MiG-23 and MiG-29 fighter and interceptor aircraft, T-72 tanks, and BMP armoured personnel carriers, but in some cases received this equipment before non-Soviet members of the Warsaw Pact. Soviet Defence Minister Dmitri Ustinov agreed in 1983 to sell the MiG-29 to India before the aircraft had been delivered to the Soviet air force.<sup>28</sup> Subsequently, the Soviets allowed the Indian government to co-produce the MiG-29 in order to stop discussions between India and France for purchase of Mirage aircraft. India began receiving T-72 tanks before some of Moscow's Warsaw Pact allies, and also entered into a co-production scheme for this arms system as well.<sup>29</sup>

India was the first Third World country to lease submarines from the USSR, a Charlie-class nuclear submarine that is being used to train officers and engineers in handling nuclear naval operations. The Indians anticipated the purchase or lease of additional submarines over the next several years, but the Soviets may be reluctant to contribute to the arms race between Indian and Pakistan in view of current differences over Kashmir, and Moscow's unwillingness to contribute to an arms race in South Asia. Nevertheless, the Indian navy acquired eight additional diesel submarines in 1990, to strengthen its existing fleet of fifteen submarines.

The naval modernisation programme also calls for improving India's maritime air-patrol capability, which is built around the TU-124 from Soviet inventory. India is also buying four highly sensitive anti-submarine warfare vessels, two of which were delivered by the Soviets in 1990.

The Soviets, over the near term, will have to continue these favourable arrangements with the Indians because, as Rajan Menon has noted in his excellent study, Moscow is facing increased competition from Western European states in its arms transfers to New Delhi.<sup>30</sup> During the 1980s, India purchased Jaguar and Sea Harrier aircraft from the United Kingdom, Type 1500 submarines from West Germany, and Mirage fighter aircraft from France. Several years ago, India began producing the Franco-German Milan anti-tank missile under its own licence. Moscow's willingness to sell both MiG-29 aircraft and T-80 tanks to India before introducing them into Soviet forces is the strongest indication to date (1990) of the Kremlin's concern with the diversification of Indian arms purchases. It is almost certain, therefore, that the Soviet programme of giving pride of place to India in the delivery of sophisticated frontline weapons will continue under Gorbachev.

Soviet arms transfers enabled Moscow to withstand the uncertainty in Soviet-Indian relations that followed the assassination of Indira Gandhi in October 1984. At that time, Rajiv Gandhi, who succeeded his mother in office, was perceived as less ideological and more pragmatic, and quite likely to seek a more balanced relationship between the Soviet Union and United States. Indira Gandhi had become politically reliable and predictable to the Soviets whereas Rajiv was an unknown who was considered less likely to maintain an unabashed tilt toward the USSR. Moscow's willingness to supply India with very sophisticated military equipment at excellent prices, as well as production licences for some of its frontline weapons systems, clearly stabilised the Soviet-Indian relationship in the wake of Indira Gandhi's assassination.

Following his accession to power in March 1985, Gorbachev quickly made it clear that India's position as one of Moscow's most important Third World clients was secure. His first visit to an Asian country or to any Third World nation was to India in November 1986. Whereas Washington was slow to pursue a dialogue with Rajiv Gandhi, Gorbachev reassured New Delhi in a major speech at Vladivostok in July 1986 that Soviet-Indian relations were high on Moscow's foreign-policy agenda. He expressed Moscow's shared concern with India over continuing US supplies of military assistance to Pakistan and affirmed that the USSR 'naturally sees the need to strengthen India's defensive capabilities'.<sup>31</sup>

During the visit, Gorbachev sought and received Indian support for many of the broad, rhetorical themes of 'new thinking'. He and Gandhi signed the 'Delhi Declaration', setting forth ten principles of peaceful coexistence, and both subsequently touted the statement as the guiding document for international efforts to promote peace. In the wake of Gorbachev's second visit to India in November 1988, Soviet commentary stressed the importance of India to the Soviet presence in South Asia.<sup>32</sup> The Soviet-Indian friendship treaty, which was signed in 1971, expires in 1991, and both sides expect renewal. Despite recent indications of improved Sino-Soviet and Sino-Indian relations, both Moscow and New Delhi remain concerned with events in Beijing and will want to maintain some semblance of a special relationship.

## CONCLUSIONS AND OUTLOOK

Soviet military intervention in Afghanistan was a decisive factor in the decline of Soviet-American relations, particularly the failure to ratify the SALT II agreement in 1979. Prior to Gorbachev's accession to power in 1985, the position of the Soviet leadership had been that Soviet behaviour in the Third World would not be linked in any way to Soviet-American bilateral relations. At the party congress of the Czechoslovak Communist Party in 1981, for example, Soviet General Secretary Leonid Brezhnev ridiculed what he termed an attempt by the United States to set 'preconditions' for negotiations between the superpowers and argued that the United States would view Soviet leaders as 'simpletons' if they demanded that the US abandon its military bases abroad or end its arming of 'dictatorial terrorist regimes' before bilateral discussions could begin.<sup>33</sup> Politburo candidate member Boris Ponomarev, who was then chief of the central committee's International Department, dismissed the issue of linkage as an attempt to make the USSR 'pay' for detente by giving up its support of Third World liberation movements.<sup>34</sup>

The virtual collapse of detente in 1979 following the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan led to some changes in the official Soviet position toward the Soviet-American competition in the Third World, particularly the need for regulating the actions of the major powers in such regions of confrontation as South Asia. In the wake of the Afghan invasion, Soviet officials began to address the need for 'rules' to manage the activities of superpowers in the Third World, culminating with Brezhnev's dinner speech for Libyan leader al-Qadhafi that identified for the first time specific principles of conduct in the Third World that should apply to the

permanent members of the United Nation's Security Council.<sup>35</sup> Brezhnev's 'code of conduct' featured calls for noninterference in the domestic affairs of Third World countries and the renunciation of 'spheres of interest', thus acknowledging the existence of a problem in managing competition in the Third World between major powers, and the need to discuss international norms with specific application to Third World regions.

Brezhnev followed his 'code of conduct' speech with several additional proposals aimed at regulating superpower behaviour in the Third World. Two months before his death, during a visit to India, he suggested that NATO and the Warsaw Pact mutually refrain from extending their spheres of operations to Asia, Africa, and Latin America.<sup>36</sup> Brezhnev's successor, Yury Andropov, also showed signs of interest in containing regional conflict in the Third World at the outset of his term as general secretary, avoiding mention of Moscow's traditionally favoured 'socialist-oriented' clients in the Third World and emphasising the dire economic conditions in the Third World without offering any indication of additional assistance from the Soviet Union.

The most significant sign of Andropov's interest in toning down commitments to client regimes and in reviving discussion of managing superpower competition came in January 1983. During Andropov's only trip outside the Soviet Union as general secretary, the Warsaw Pact issued a Political Declaration that for the first time softpedalled proclamations of support for Third World clients and emphasised concern over the broader international consequences of regional conflicts.<sup>37</sup> The Political Declaration warned that local conflicts could develop into 'armed confrontation on a worldwide scale', and it linked the improvement of the 'world situation' to the 'elimination' of current conflicts in Asia, Africa, and Latin America and to the 'prevention' of new conflicts. The declaration also reiterated Brezhnev's 'peace proposals' concerning the Third World and called on the United States to return to the suspended talks on limiting Soviet and American arms transfers to foreign countries. The souring of Soviet-American relations in 1983, however, following the Soviet walkout from arms talks in Geneva and the Soviet shootdown of a South Korean commercial airliner, ended any possibility of a Soviet-American dialogue on sensitive regional issues.

Soviet articles and statements over the past several years strongly indicate that Gorbachev has revived measures to reduce Soviet assets and commitments in the Third World as well as to arrange regional solutions to crisis situations, preferably in conjunction with the United States. In addition to completing their withdrawal from Afghanistan, the Soviets

have encouraged such clients as Cuba and Vietnam to reduce military involvements in Angola and Cambodia, respectively, and have proposed Soviet–American guarantees for security in Central America. Moscow presumably will now turn its attention to the Middle East and South Asia where there has been a growing Soviet concern about the proliferation of sophisticated weapons systems.

Several months after Foreign Minister Shevardnadze's trip to Egypt in February 1989, when he proposed the establishment of a 'military risk-reduction center' and a 'nuclear-free and chemical-free zone' in the Middle East, the Indian government announced that it had fired its first medium-range ballistic missile.<sup>38</sup> This test enabled New Delhi to join the United States, USSR, China, Britain, France, and Israel as states with the capacity to produce surface-to-surface ballistic missiles.<sup>39</sup> India's missile programme has thus been successful despite the efforts of the Soviet Union to restrict the transfer of high technology that can be used in the development of ballistic missiles. (India exploded its first nuclear device in 1974, but it was not until 1988 that it launched its first missile, a short-range missile with a range of less than 150 miles.)

The fact that India has established self-reliance in nearly all of its major weapons systems – ballistic missiles, fighter aircraft, and tanks – means a loss of leverage for the Soviet Union. Ever since its sudden military defeat to China in 1962, India has stressed the importance of military preparedness and self-reliance and, as a result, has become the dominant military power in South Asia. Pakistani officials have acknowledged concern over Indian weapons programmes and, at the same time, have held their own widely publicised tests of tactical missiles with ranges short of 200 miles.<sup>40</sup>

Shevardnadze's public remarks in both Moscow and Cairo suggested that Moscow was not worried about actually being targeted by any of these systems in South Asia (or the Middle East) but probably realised that another major confrontation in these regions between Indians and Pakistanis (or Arabs and Israelis) could lead to the use of ballistic missiles or chemical weapons that would threaten a Soviet client. Moscow's experience in previous regional confrontations has been that its clients have pressured the Soviets for direct combat support that the USSR has been thus far unwilling to provide. Crisis management in these regions, therefore, will become more difficult and time urgent as states acquire more sophisticated and lethal weaponry. It is particularly ironic that the key states in these regions are acquiring intermediate-range ballistic missiles just as the United States and the Soviet Union have agreed to eliminate such weapons from Europe.

The Soviets, for the first time, have questioned their leasing of a nuclear submarine to India. In an *Izvestia* article, a Soviet commentator indicated that the submarine did not come under the provisions of the Non-proliferation Treaty since it did not have nuclear weapons, but the issue should come under discussion in view of the possibility of Pakistan's purchase of a nuclear submarine from China. The leasing arrangement with India was the first of its kind in the Third World, and the Soviets now refer to the possibility of a naval race in the Indian Ocean between India and Pakistan as an 'alarming trend'.<sup>41</sup>

### **The Effect of the Iraqi Invasion of Kuwait**

The Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in August 1990 highlighted a special Soviet concern, the nuclear and chemical weapons programmes on the southern borders of the Soviet Union. Moscow's western borders had been made relatively secure, particularly with the INF treaty with the United States in 1987 and the 'agreement in principle' on conventional arms in 1990. The Soviets announced unilateral troop cuts in Central Europe in 1988, and agreed with the United States to a comprehensive system for monitoring manoeuvres and deployment in Europe. Over the next few years, there will be hundreds of inspectors in NATO and Warsaw Pact states, providing a unique early warning network for nuclear and conventional forces.

Moscow's southern border, particularly as a result of current programmes in Pakistan and Iraq, was far less certain. Analysts disagree on how close Iraq was to developing a nuclear bomb, but most agree that Baghdad was constructing its own uranium enrichment facility, with help from German and Pakistani experts. Iraq launched missiles against Iran in the 'War of the Cities' in 1988, and has since tested a 600-mile range solid fuel rocket, developed with the assistance of European firms and Brazilian experts. Iraq had the largest chemical weapons programme in the Third World, developed entirely with the aid of foreign firms. Some experts believe that Saddam Hussein had built a research facility for biological warfare outside of Baghdad.<sup>42</sup> Soviet officials have called for an international covenant on arms trade that would limit 'exports of the most dangerous weapons, particularly dual-purpose types which can be used with conventional and chemical or even nuclear loads'.<sup>43</sup>

Soviet cooperation with the United States in the wake of the Iraqi invasion strongly indicates that measures will be taken to reduce Soviet assets and commitments in Southwest Asia and arrange regional solutions to crisis situations, preferably in conjunction with the United States and

the United Nations. The Soviets consistently tried to give responsibility for the enforcement of UN resolutions to the United Nations itself, by reviving the UN's moribund Military Staff Committee.<sup>44</sup> Shevardnadze emphasised that the Military Staff Committee was the appropriate body to coordinate and implement UN sanctions, and Chief of the General Staff Mikhail Moiseyev argued that no force should be used in the Persian Gulf unless approved by the United Nations.<sup>45</sup>

One of the first consequences of this policy was Saudi Arabia's willingness in September 1990 to resume diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union. These relations were never formally broken, but had been suspended since 1938, when Joseph Stalin refused to allow Soviet Muslims to make pilgrimages to Mecca. Over the past several years the two sides have shared a dialogue over their concerns regarding petroleum and the Iran-Iraq war, but the timing of the restoration of relations was due to Saudi concern for closer relations with Moscow during the Persian Gulf crisis, particularly Soviet support for various UN resolutions aimed at forcing an Iraqi withdrawal from Kuwait.

The Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan, that was completed in February 1989, as well as the cease-fire between Iran and Iraq that was arranged in August 1989, removed major obstacles in Soviet bilateral relations with Iran and Pakistan and minor irritants in Soviet relations with India. Since then the Soviets have been particularly successful in improving political and economic relations with Iran, which has brought about increased bilateral and transit trade as well as preliminary agreements to cooperate in the construction of power stations around the Caspian Sea and railways that service the two countries. The emergence of Rafsanjani as the strongest president of Iran since the Islamic Revolution will provide the Soviets with a more predictable actor with whom to conduct a political and diplomatic dialogue. Gorbachev's patience and careful diplomacy in dealing with Khomeini's ten years of hostility and indifference have allowed Moscow to capitalise on its withdrawal from Afghanistan to establish the foundation for more correct and effective bilateral relations with Khomeini's successors, particularly Rafsanjani and Ayatollah Ali Khamenei.

The increased pace of Soviet-Iranian bilaterals presumably will continue over the near term. Iran will continue to require Soviet economic and technological assistance for its reconstruction efforts and the USSR will require Iranian support in any regional effort to hamper Pakistan's assistance to the mujahideen in Afghanistan. Recently, Soviet officials have gone out of their way to draw a sharp contrast between Tehran's 'realistic approach' to an Afghan settlement and Islamabad's 'obstructionist course'.<sup>46</sup>



Rafsanjani's visit to Moscow in the summer of 1989 provided the best evidence to date (1990) of the interests of both sides in improving their bilateral relations. More than any other single event since the Islamic revolution and the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979, the visit marked the beginning of the end of Iran's diplomatic isolation, and Moscow's ability to improve its diplomatic position in Southwest Asia. In view of the joint declaration's reference to seeing a 'deeper knowledge of the spiritual values' of both countries, Moscow may also believe that it must prevent Tehran from exploiting the religious interests of Soviet Muslims at a time of greater ethnic and religious unrest in the Soviet Union. Clearly, both sides have their own reasons for improving political and economic ties at this particular juncture.

The outlook for the Soviet-Pakistani relationship is more problematic. On the positive side, the Soviets will benefit from Pakistan's requirement for Soviet cooperation in any effort by Islamabad to improve relations with India. In the wake of the Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan, Pakistan must concentrate on consolidating a new government that faces a complex regional situation and a series of economic problems.<sup>47</sup> The Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan has also worsened the political dialogue between the Afghan resistance and Islamabad on the one hand and the Pakistani military and intelligence communities on the other. And if the Pakistanis find that they can no longer manipulate the image of the 'Soviet threat' to increase support from China and the United States, they may have to look for ways to improve ties with Moscow.

On the negative side, there is a long history of Soviet-Pakistani hostility, that was fostered by a close Soviet-Indian military relationship and by Soviet intimidation tactics against Islamabad during the cross-border pursuit of the mujahideen from 1979 to 1989. The two sides continue to provide military assistance to opposing factions in the Afghan civil war. Soviet economic aid to Pakistan has continued during this period and there has even been a Soviet offer to build a nuclear power station in Pakistan, but a deep distrust toward the Soviet Union continues to exist in Islamabad.

A Soviet initiative to correct this Pakistani perception can be anticipated in the near term as part of Gorbachev's 'new thinking' toward Asia, as outlined in his speeches at Vladivostok in July 1986 and Khabarovsk in 1988, but the Islamabad government is unlikely to respond to any Soviet bait that could compromise its diplomatic and military dependence on China and the United States.<sup>48</sup> The anti-Sovietism of the Pakistani military is a significant obstacle to improved relations, and recent developments in Pakistan have enhanced the political role of the military. Separatist

activity on the part of Soviet Central Asian Muslims could also deter improved bilateral relations between the USSR and Pakistan.

India will continue to be the primary focus of Soviet attention in the region for strategic and regional reasons, but automatic Soviet support for India in any dispute over Kashmir can no longer be assured. India is important to the USSR for containing the United States and China in South Asia and for expanding Soviet influence in the Third World and particularly among the states of the nonaligned movement. India, on the other hand, needs the Soviet Union in order to contain China and Pakistan and to insulate the region from US involvement. Soviet military assistance allows India to act as the dominant power in the region, and Indian political and diplomatic support permits the Soviet Union to have entree in South Asia. Moscow is no longer in a position to provide such valuable resources as grain and petroleum to India, but the Soviet-Indian relationship will continue to be close and the relations of both India and the Soviet Union with the key states of the region will continue to be influenced by their relations with each other.

Improved Sino-Soviet relations provide New Delhi with a freer hand to improve its relations with China. Gorbachev, in fact, encouraged India to move in such a direction during his visit to New Delhi in 1988, when he referred to the 'common interests' of the three states.<sup>49</sup> Sino-Soviet border talks, which resumed in 1987, are a useful model for discussions between India and China.

Moscow's professed interest in reducing its defence budget, as well as its withdrawal of forces from Afghanistan, Mongolia, and the Sino-Soviet frontier, indicate, however, that the Soviet leadership, as of 1990, has redefined the nature of the threat and no longer believes that a greater military presence in South and Southwest Asia can assure greater political security. Prior to Gorbachev's 'new political thinking', Soviet interest in South Asia and Southwest Asia was primarily strategic in nature, deriving almost entirely from the longstanding Sino-Soviet conflict. The recent improvement in Sino-Soviet relations, which was highlighted by Gorbachev's historic visit to China in May 1989, indicated that he was less interested than his predecessors in using heavy-handed diplomacy and taking military risks to gain Soviet objectives.<sup>50</sup>

When Gorbachev told the United Nations General Assembly, in December 1988, that the 'bell of each regional conflict tolls for all of us' he appeared to be reflecting a certain amount of disillusionment with the Soviet globalism of the past as well as a recognition that minor regional confrontations could lead to major disputes among the superpowers.<sup>51</sup> Several weeks after the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, a Soviet general officer

warned that the major threat to the USSR was the 'threat from those to whom the Soviets have sold and continue to sell (or to be more precise, have given and continue to give as presents) state-of-the-art devastating weapons'.<sup>52</sup> Gorbachev then justified Moscow's abandonment of Iraq on security grounds, calling the invasion a 'violation of everything the world community now pins its hopes on as it seeks to put civilisation on the tracks of peaceful development'.<sup>53</sup> He said Moscow had 'no other choice' than to join the West in condemning Iraq because the use of force to redraw borders could 'set off a perilous chain reaction endangering the world community'.

He called for an 'international covenant on arms trade similar to the Nonproliferation Treaty' to end the transfer of dual-purpose weapons that could be used with conventional and nuclear weapons. Increased domestic political instability in all the states of South and Southwest Asia would increase Moscow's interest in a 'security regime' in the region. Future Soviet actions in South and Southwest Asia would test Moscow's attitudes toward the problem of proliferation and the 'threat from the South'.

The Soviets thus far have not emulated for South Asia Shevardnadze's call for a 'risk-reduction center' in the Middle East, but India's test of its first medium-range ballistic missile added a new dimension to a tense security situation in South Asia. The Soviets are certain to return to the idea of such centres and presumably will try to apply them to discussion of regional conflicts, proliferation, and terrorism. Soviet-American success in abolishing intermediate-range missile systems in 1987 and limiting conventional arms in Europe in 1990, along with intrusive on-site verification measures for both agreements, will contribute to the likelihood of a more substantive dialogue on the Third World in the 1990s.

Moscow can also be expected to revive the discussion of 'rules of conduct' for the United States and the Soviet Union in regional conflicts. An attempt was made in their 'Principles of Mutual Relations' in 1972 to formulate general notions of such 'rules', but there was no detailed elaboration of rules of conduct, and, more important, no mechanism to ensure observance of rules. The 'Principles' signed in 1985 discussed the creation of centres to reduce the nuclear threat, but was imprecise and ambiguous regarding rules of conduct.

The Soviets could return to earlier talks on limiting Soviet and American weapons transfers to foreign countries. The Soviets have reduced their arms deliveries to all major recipients in the Third World and, prior to Gorbachev's accession to power in 1985, linked the improvement of the 'world situation' to the 'elimination of conflict in Asia, Africa, and Latin America'.<sup>54</sup> Earlier Brezhnev acknowledged the

need to manage superpower competition in the Third World and discuss international norms with specific application to Third World regions.<sup>55</sup>

In any event, the Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan in 1989, and Soviet-American cooperation in the Persian Gulf, will make it easier for the USSR to improve its diplomatic and political position in the region. Had the Gulf crisis occurred five-to-ten years ago, the Soviets would have adopted a position of friendly neutrality, at best, and reacted strongly and negatively to the appearance of US forces in Saudi Arabia. The Islamic community would have separated on the issue of the US presence in the Persian Gulf. By moving quickly to coordinate policy with Washington rather than to exploit the situation and undermine US actions, the Soviets made it difficult for the formation of Islamic opposition to Washington. As long as Moscow continues to improve its relations with the United States (and China), it will become far more difficult for such regional actors as India and Pakistan to manipulate the actions of the superpowers for regional purposes.

## NOTES

1. It took nearly ten years for the USSR to acknowledge that Soviet troops played a direct part in the military coup in Kabul in 1979. In an interview which appeared in *Izvestia* on 4 May 1989, the chief researcher of the Institute of Oriental Studies, Yuri Gankovsky, recorded that Soviet troops participated in the storming of Amin's palace, although he did not address the issue of how Amin was killed. Over the past year, Soviet media have discussed some of the 'mistakes' made in Afghanistan and have pointed to the 'stagnation' of the leadership of Leonid Brezhnev as the major cause of the Soviet invasion. *Izvestia*, 4 May 1989; *New York Times*, 5 May 1989, p. 5.
2. Syria, Iraq, South Yemen, North Yemen, India.
3. *Izvestia*, 23 May 1983, p. 5.
4. *Izvestia*, 25 July 1983, p. 5.
5. *Pravda*, 15 March 1982, p. 3.
6. Alvin Z. Rubinstein, *Soviet Policy Toward Turkey, Iran, and Afghanistan* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1982) p. 60.
7. Henry S. Bradsher, *Afghanistan and the Soviet Union* (Durham, NC: Duke Press Policy Studies, 1983) pp. 254-5.
8. In the first authoritative account of the high-level military debate surrounding the decision making of the invasion of Afghanistan, General of the Army Valentin I. Varrenikov, a deputy defence minister, stated in an interview with the weekly magazine *Ogonyok* that the General Staff was opposed to the invasion but was overruled by Defence Minister Dmitri F. Ustinov. Varrenikov was the senior defence ministry official in Afghanistan for the last four years of the war and, after the Soviets completed the

withdrawal of forces, was named commander of ground forces. Varrenikov added that Marshal Nikolai Ogarkov, then chief of the general staff, and Marshal Sergei F. Akhromeyev, who later became chief of staff, also opposed the intervention. (Bill Keller, article in *New York Times*, 19 March 1989, p. 27.)

9. *Pravda*, 11 June 1982; *Izvestia*, 27 October 1983, p. 5.
10. *Pravda*, 9 May 1984, p. 5.
11. The speeches and proceedings of the party congress were reviewed from the daily reports on the Soviet Union of the United States Foreign Broadcast Information Service (FBIS) for the period 25 February to 14 March 1986. They were taken in most cases from TASS reports or Radio Moscow. General Secretary Gorbachev spoke to the congress on the opening day.
12. *Washington Post*, 26 August 1986, p. 22.
13. See FBIS, Middle East, 7 June 1989, pp. 47–53, for the Khomeini will broadcast by Tehran radio on 5 June 1989. Also see *Washington Post*, 8 June 1989, p. 21.
14. *Washington Post*, 3 July 1989, p. 1: 'Rebuilding Plan to Cost \$15 Billion, Tehran Says' by Patrick E. Tyler.
15. *Pravda*, 24 June 1989, p. 5.
16. *Pravda*, 23 June 1989, p. 5.
17. Tehran TV, 22 September 1990.
18. IRNA, 24 June 1989. Tehran radio interview with Rafsanjani.
19. *Izvestia*, 3 August 1989, p. 5.
20. *Tehran Times*, 20 June 1989.
21. Soviet television service in Russian, 2 July 1989, in *Foreign Broadcast Information Service, Daily Report: Soviet Union* (hereafter FBIS–SU), 7 July 1989, p. 25.
22. TASS, 30 November 1990.
23. Rajan Menon, *Soviet Power and the Third World* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986) p. 223.
24. *New York Times*, 7 June 1989, p. 3: 'Bush and Bhutto Agree on Afghan Aid' by Bernard Weinraub.
25. Congressional testimony by William H. Webster, the Director of the Central Intelligence Agency, to the Senate Governmental Affairs Committee on 18 May 1989. Also see *New York Times*, 19 May 1989, p. 19: 'CIA Chief Wary of Pakistani Nuclear Program' by Stephen Engelberg.
26. *Washington Post*, 7 June 1989, p. 17: 'Bhutto Denies Pakistan Plans Nuclear Bomb' by David B. Ottaway.
27. *New York Times*, 7 June 1989, p. 3: 'Bush and Bhutto Agree on Afghan Aid' by Bernard Weinraub.
28. *New York Times*, 25 September 1984, p. 7.
29. Andrew Cockburn, *The Threat: Inside the Soviet Military Machine* (New York: Random House, 1983) p. 83.
30. See Rajan Menon, *Soviet Power and the Third World* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986).
31. *Pravda*, 5 January 1987, p. 6: 'A Big Step Forward: Thoughts Following M. S. Gorbachev's Visit to India' by Yevgeniy Primakov.
32. *Pravda*, 23 November 1988, p. 1.

33. *Pravda*, 8 April 1981, p. 3.
34. *Kommunist*, March 1981, no. 5, p. 158.
35. *Pravda*, 28 April 1981, p. 5.
36. *Pravda*, 18 September 1982, p. 5.
37. *Pravda*, 7 January 1983, p. 1.
38. *New York Times*, 24 March 1989, p. 2: 'Spread of Missiles is Seen as Soviet Worry in Mideast' by Thomas L. Friedman.
39. *New York Times*, 23 May 1989, p. 9: 'India Reports Successful Test of Mid-Range Missile' by Barbara Crossette.
40. As a result of this activity in the development of ballistic missiles in South Asia and the Middle East, the United States, Japan, and the key states of Western Europe, in 1987 formed the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR) to stop the transfer of ballistic missile technology to Third World nations. The MTCR is not a formal treaty or a binding agreement, but is the only Western multilateral effort to curb missile proliferation other than the regime established by the Non-proliferation Treaty. The Soviets have pursued parallel steps to stop the flow of Soviet missiles and technology to the Third World with ranges of more than 300 miles, but have been unwilling thus far to join the MTCR. The recent efforts of West Germany and China to assist India and Pakistan, respectively, in the development of ballistic missiles could convince the Soviets of the importance of joining the MTCR even if it represents only a 'gentleman's agreement' to stop sales of missile technology. In any event, the MTCR has failed to prevent the successful test launches of indigenously developed, short-range ballistic missiles by India and Pakistan, as well as India's preparations to launch a medium-range ballistic missile.
41. *Izvestia*, 6 October 1990, p. 3: 'Pakistani Nuclear Submarines in the Indian Ocean' by N. Paklin.
42. *Washington Post*, 17 September 1990, p. 27.
43. *New Times*, 27 August 1990, p. 12: 'The Threat from the South' by Major General Vadim Makarevsky.
44. *New York Times*, 10 August 1990, p. 15: 'UN Council Declares Void Iraqi Annexation of Kuwait' by Paul Lewis.
45. TASS, 25 September 1990.
46. *Pravda*, 1 April 1989, p. 5.
47. Thomas P. Thornton, 'The New Phase in US-Pakistan Relations', *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 68, no. 2, pp. 142-159.
48. Carolyn Ekedahl and Melvin Goodman, 'Gorbachev's "New Directions" in Asia', *Journal of Northeast Asian Studies*, vol. III, no. 3 (Fall 1989) pp. 3-24.
49. *Far East Economic Review*, 1 December 1988, p. 38.
50. See Carolyn McGiffert Ekedahl and Melvin A. Goodman, 'Gorbachev's "New Directions" in Asia', *Journal of Northeast Asian Studies*, vol. III, no. 3 (Fall 1989) pp. 3-24.
51. *Pravda*, 8 December 1988, pp. 1-2.
52. *New Times*, 27 August 1990, p. 12: 'The Threat from the South' by Major General Vadim Makarevsky.
53. *Washington Post*, 18 August 1990, p. 15: 'Gorbachev Cautious about Gulf' by David Remnick.

54. *Pravda*, 7 January 1983, p. 5. (Political Declaration of the Warsaw Pact.)
55. *Pravda*, 28 April 1981, p. 5. (Brezhnev speech in honour of visiting Libyan Leader Qadhafi.)

# 5 Soviet Prospects in Afghanistan

Alvin Z. Rubinstein

On 15 February 1989, Soviet troops left Afghanistan, as required by the Geneva accords, ending the Soviet Union's Afghan War. As in Iran in 1946, Moscow failed in its attempt to dominate strategically important real estate along its Central Asian periphery through the direct use of military power. But defeat did not mean an end to Moscow's ambitions; nor was the withdrawal of troops tantamount to political and economic disengagement or to a flagging of interest in retaining a presence and exercising influence over a future Afghan government. After the Soviet withdrawal, two developments surprised foreign observers: Gorbachev's willingness to expend considerable resources (estimated at about \$3 billion a year, at the 1990 rate) in order to support the pro-Moscow communist leadership in Kabul; second, and really unexpected, Najibullah's ability to survive, to hold on to the key cities and repel Mujahideen efforts to take any major provincial capital.<sup>1</sup> These, in turn, suggest that Gorbachev was far from reconciling himself to 'a nonaligned, independent, and neutral Afghanistan as a neighbor' and that he sought a decisive voice in the reconstitution of the Afghan political system.

Heirs to a tradition that has sought to dominate all countries situated along its periphery, Soviet leaders are accustomed to thinking about the long term. As concerns Afghanistan, they can take solace in Lenin's counsel to accept temporary retreats in the face of stiff resistance by an adversary. Encapsulated in the title of his book, *One Step Forward, Two Steps Backward*, the advice appears to confuse some who transpose the arrangements of the steps, believing that only thus can progress towards an object be made. Everything, however, depends on the relative size of the steps. Thus, the Soviets can take heart from a concatenation of circumstances in which may be envisaged the prospect of eventual repair of their Afghan situation. Three considerations of potential promise loom large:

- geographic contiguity;
- Afghan economic dependence;
- the ephemerality of US interest.



## GEOGRAPHIC CONTIGUITY

The border between the Soviet Union and Afghanistan was established in the early 1880s when Russia and Britain agreed to accept an independent Afghanistan as a buffer state between their two expanding empires. More than half of the 1500 mile Soviet–Afghan border is navigable along the Amu Darya (Oxus) River, thus conducting trade and the expansion of comprehensive economic ties. There are also ethnic affinities between the Uzbeks, Tajiks, Kirghiz, and Turkomans who are found on both sides of the border – though the majority of Afghanistan’s population, the dominant Pashtun (Pathan)-speaking ethnic group, live south of the formidable Hindu Kush Mountain range. The effect of the contiguity, the cross-national ethnic complementarity, and the topographical accessibility of Soviet Central Asia to that part of Afghanistan situated north of the Hindu Kush, is to strengthen Moscow’s belief in the inevitability of a close Soviet–Afghan political relationship.

As if to confirm this Soviet expectation, Afghanistan has remained largely isolated from foreign and international integrationist influences for most of the past century. Moreover, as the dominant power sharing a long border with an Afghanistan that has no tradition of friendly relations with neighbouring Islamic Iran or Pakistan, the Soviet Union is in a position to exploit – and to be patient about doing so – the advantages afforded by geography for forging a special relationship with Afghanistan. Afghanistan’s policy of relative isolation benefited Moscow in the past, and its continuance would do so in the future as well.

## AFGHAN ECONOMIC DEPENDENCE

Just as Czarist Russia’s absorption of Central Asia in the late nineteenth century was facilitated by the railway and by economic development, so, too, Moscow’s forward policy in Afghanistan relied heavily on economic instruments. Soviet penetration began in earnest under Khrushchev in the mid-1950s and proceeded in a receptive environment. Invited in by an Afghan leadership that was bent on internal change and was motivated by irredentist ambitions aimed at Pakistan’s North West Frontier Province, the Soviet Union was willing, as other powers were not, to bankroll Afghan projects. Prime Minister Muhammad Daoud Khan soon found himself with very limited alternative sources of capital assistance and increasingly dependent on Moscow’s largesse.

Moscow was an accommodating banker who made economic projects and military modernisation possible. As such, it quickly dominated the planning, financing, and construction of Afghanistan's infant transportation and industrial infrastructure. (Moscow's development of the all-weather road from the port of Qizil Qala on the Amu Darya, south to Kunduz, Doshi, and Kabul, and accompanying construction of the two-mile long Salang Tunnel, made the 1979 invasion logistically feasible.) In the 1960s and 1970s and even during the troubled 1980s, Moscow never lost sight of the importance of economic links. The development of highways, port facilities, and hydroelectric stations, and the prospecting for natural gas and mineral resources (especially in northern Afghanistan) proceeded apace. The long-term aim of economic assistance was Afghanistan's dependence on and integration into the USSR's Central Asia system.

Of special importance to Moscow were Afghanistan's natural gas fields. These have been operating at high levels since the 125-mile long natural-gas pipeline completed in 1968 connected the Shibarghan field to the Soviet network of pipelines in Central Asia. The sale of natural gas is Afghanistan's principal export earner, and all the gas is sold to the Soviet Union. That the meters measuring the gas flow were located on the Soviet side of the border is suggestive of Afghanistan's rapid descent into dependence on the Soviet Union, and also of an arrogance in the Soviet approach to Afghanistan that later was to prompt the decision to intervene militarily to tidy up a troublesome political situation. Another sign of growing Afghan dependence was the construction of an electrical grid system, begun to provide energy for the development of the northern part of the country.

The war disrupted, but did not end, the patterns of dependence introduced in the 1960s and 1970s. Economically, during the 1980s, the Soviet military intervention had the following consequences: *destruction* and devastation of much of the economic infrastructure (underground water canals, fruit orchards, livestock, farm equipment, and so on) on which agriculture is based, and also a deepening of Afghan *dependence* on Soviet supplies, to keep the economy functioning and to subsidise the upkeep of the several million Afghans uprooted by the fighting from their traditional tribal areas and still resident largely in and around Kabul. We have an anomalous situation in which the Soviet Union on the one hand, wreaked havoc on a society and, on the other hand, was pivotally positioned – and motivated by longstanding imperial ambitions – to help restore a semblance of normality. Only the Soviet Union is poised to absorb all that Afghanistan can produce in the near future and only it can

offer the extensive range of equipment and services needed to repair the damaged Soviet-built infrastructure.

Moscow has sound reasons for envisaging an eventual role for itself in Afghanistan's future economic life (along with a political accommodation) comparable to that which it enjoyed during the halcyon years of the Khrushchev and Brezhnev periods. The duration of the interregnum between the end of direct Soviet military involvement and the start of a new relationship with a non-Communist Afghan regime depends on how quickly – or long – it takes to form a stable government in Kabul, on the character of the government that takes power, and on the policy of the United States (as well as Pakistan and Saudi Arabia).

## DECLINING US/WESTERN INTEREST

There are historical grounds for Moscow's assuming that Washington's long-term policy toward Afghanistan will be one of 'benign neglect'. US interest was never strong to begin with. After the Second World War, the United States was slow to respond to Afghan overtures for closer ties. Distance, indifference, and ignorance made inertia difficult to overcome. An economic aid programme was belatedly introduced and indifferently implemented. Largely a reactive Cold War move, it soon came into conflict with the far more important US strategic interests in developing close ties with Pakistan, then at odds with Afghanistan over the Pashtunistan issue. Unwilling to risk a rift with Pakistan, the United States turned down Afghanistan's request for military assistance, prompting Kabul (once Daoud came to power in September 1953) to open an arms relationship with the Soviet Union.

Daoud's ambition overcame his judgement. Unlike the older generation, he and the small coterie around him did not believe closer ties with the Soviet Union would jeopardise the country's independence. Convinced that with the British departure from India Moscow had little to gain from subverting or invading Afghanistan, Daoud discarded the previous policy of hiring as technical advisers and teachers only nationals from countries that posed no threat, and engaged Russians by the hundreds to develop the nation's infrastructure and industry – and to modernise the Afghan army.<sup>2</sup> For this misjudgement, Daoud lost his life, and Afghanistan its independence.

For those Soviet leaders possibly looking for a silver lining in the Afghan defeat, there is the prospect of a sharply diminished US interest. Such conjecture derives from a number of assumptions: first, that, with

the end of the forward projection of Soviet power and the reversion of Afghanistan to something resembling the status quo before April 1978, an element of predictability and acceptability with respect to Afghanistan's political function in the region will have been restored to the superpower relationship; second, that, with the Soviet military withdrawal complementing the end of the Iran–Iraq War, US uneasiness over a Soviet threat to the continued flow of Persian Gulf oil has been dispelled; third, that the United States, too, has a strong interest in fostering improvement in US–Soviet relations and striking Afghanistan from the old Cold War agenda; and fourth, that the United States, which does not need Afghan resources or markets, might even welcome a measure of Soviet–Afghan economic cooperation, if only to obviate the possibility of a drain on Western aid resources. Should the end of the Soviet military adventure in Afghanistan usher in a new period of American indifference the opportunity would again exist for new Soviet inroads. Economic indifference by the non-communist world would have the effect of pressuring any post-PDPA Afghan government to get on with a Soviet–Afghan reconciliation.

That Moscow's interest in Afghanistan has not waned is evident from its behaviour. Notwithstanding serious food shortages and domestic unrest stemming, in part, from the problems of *perestroika*, the Soviet Union continues to funnel scarce resources to the Najibullah regime. The years 1989 and 1990 are not illustrative of the scope and depth of the USSR's economic support and involvement: during this period, the overwhelming amount of Moscow's estimated \$3 billion annual outlay went for military equipment and supplies, with the remainder for food supplies needed to sustain Kabul. Still, despite his troubled economy at home, Gorbachev has not stinted on aid.

Having said this, there is value in taking a closer look at Soviet economic interest. Thus, for example, throughout the year of 1988, though already withdrawing militarily, the Soviet Union worked to leave in place an infrastructure of interests, institutions, and linkages on which a new Soviet–Afghan relationship might be built; admittedly, though, the efforts may have been more cosmetic, in preparation for the withdrawal, than firm commitments for the future. The range of agreements and projects suggests the scope of its long-term ambitions: *energy resources* development, including the construction of hydroelectric power stations on the Kabul River and further exploitation of natural gas fields; strengthening of

*communications and transportation networks*, including the upgrading of the port of Hayraton and construction of a railway line south to the foot of the Hindu Kush;<sup>3</sup> geological surveying and development of *mineral resources*, with particular attention to copper ore and non-ferrous metals; *bridge construction*; fostering of *agricultural and small industrial cooperatives*; *educational exchanges*; and so on. An umbrella agreement signed in Moscow on 21 September 1988 called for extensive economic, technical, and trade cooperation between the Soviet Union and the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan (DRA) for the period up to the year 2000.<sup>4</sup> Though reliable data are lacking, most of Afghanistan's foreign trade is with the Soviet Union, perhaps as much as 80 per cent of the total. And of the estimated 7 billion dollars in economic assistance that Afghanistan is supposed to have received over the past 35 years, Soviet sources claim that 'the Soviet Union accounted for three-fourths of the sum'.<sup>5</sup> The Afghan economy is enmeshed with the USSR by an interlocking grid of projects.<sup>6</sup> Willy nilly, its dependence on Soviet imports and subsidies must inevitably limit the freedom of political action of any non-communist Afghan government – a calculation that no doubt looms centrally in Soviet thinking.

The three long-term factors foreshadowing a gradual normalisation of Soviet–Afghan relations may be offset by a variable that may operate strongly against the Russians and their hopes of a comeback in Kabul: the hatred that the Afghans have developed for the Russians over the decade to 1989. There may well be an important psychological change in the Afghan attitude toward the Russians. Before 1979, the Afghans were suspicious but tolerant of Russians; in the future, they may harbour far more deep-seated animosities than they ever did toward the British – and those feelings were still strong in the 1960s, decades after the British were prime meddlers in Afghan affairs. For the moment, there is no way of anticipating how this hatred might lead a non-communist Afghan leadership to pursue alternatives that would forestall their ever again permitting Afghanistan to become heavily dependent on the USSR for anything. At a minimum, it may make any Soviet–Afghan reconciliation a very long-term development indeed. On the other hand, a more felicitous situation from Moscow's perspective would attend if Najibullah's People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA) succeeded in hanging on with Soviet help and forcing a compromise settlement.

Given the geographic contiguity, the thickened network of roads and projects that have linked much of Afghanistan's economy to the Soviet Central Asian system, the more than three decades of economic encroachment, the expectation of an impending diminution of Western interest, and the Soviet offers in the United Nations of aid for reconstruction efforts,

Moscow clearly has no intention of washing its hands of Afghanistan; in this respect, certainly, any comparison with the US experience with Vietnam is inappropriate.

In looking ahead to the kind of bilateral relationship that Moscow might be able to fashion with various possible governments in Kabul, we should keep in mind the Soviet Union's past behaviour in the Third World, where it reacted to events rather than initiated them. Its approach, we may assume, will be strongly shaped by evolving circumstances and by the Soviet leadership's willingness to bear the costs of imperial intrusiveness. Thus, the extent to which Moscow relies on conventional instruments of political normalisation (economic and military assistance, treaties, trade, and advisory missions) as against non-conventional instruments (KGB/KHAD intrigues and manipulations and the instigation of internal destabilisation and internecine tribal conflict) is contingent on what happens within Afghanistan and on its perception of how it can best benefit from the emerging situation.

Moscow's moves will have to wait upon Afghan events, specifically the actions of (1) the seven-party Mujahideen coalition in Peshawar, the Islamic Unity of the Mujahideen of Afghanistan, commonly known as the Peshawar Seven; (2) the Mujahideen commanders in control of different areas of Afghanistan; (3) the Pakistani government, particularly its Inter-Services Intelligence, the military agency responsible for carrying out the government's policy toward the various Mujahideen groups; (4) the United States; and the PDPA and its ability to retain power in Kabul or be recognised by the Mujahideen as a legitimate group which should participate in some power-sharing formula designed to end the ongoing civil war.

Looking ahead, Moscow will likely have to deal with one of the following basic configurations:

- The People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan: hanging on;
- Government of 'National Reconciliation': an interim government based on an agreement between the PDPA and the non-communist Mujahideen groups;
- 'Buzkashi': a free-for-all in Kabul resulting in a devolution of authority;
- A moderate nationalist-Islamic coalition;
- Confederation based on rule by the local military commanders;
- A fundamentalist Islamic regime.

1. *PDPA: hanging on.* This would be Moscow's preferred outcome, a vindication of sorts of its overall policy. Indeed, the PDPA's continued

survival has been the biggest surprise of the period since the Soviet withdrawal. Amply supplied by Moscow, it has held on to Kabul and key urban centres and lines of communication, all of this quite contrary to the conventional wisdom abroad, which gave Najibullah only a few months, at best. However, after more than a decade in power, the PDPA leadership had gained experience, developed cadres, established networks of coopted and bribed Afghans and tribal leaders, and reached temporary agreements with local commanders, permitting the passage of Soviet supply trucks in return for a halt to air attacks and military offensives. In this way, for example, Najibullah was able to arrange for hundreds of trucks to make the trip weekly from the Soviet border through the Salang Pass Tunnel to Kabul. In addition, Moscow has been airlifting massive amounts of arms and supplies. The longer Najibullah holds on, the stronger becomes his position, and the better the possibility of fashioning some arrangement that would keep the PDPA in power, pending the establishment of a new government.

Najibullah has moved on a number of fronts to secure his power base. He has repeatedly reshuffled his cabinet, trying to fashion a coalition that might attract popular support at a time when war-weariness and Mujahideen factional infighting are growing. With the Russians gone, there is no longer a unifying theme in the countryside to mobilise against the regime in Kabul. Najibullah, sensing confusion among the opposition, has offered Mujahideen military commanders a chance to establish provincial administrations, supported by Kabul, in return for locally negotiated cease-fires.<sup>7</sup> He has manipulated political symbolism, for example, by downplaying Marxism and emphasising Afghan nationalism, attending Friday prayers, and portraying himself as a man of the people who is eager to end the fighting and rebuild the country. All of this has had some effect, but doubts remain that Najibullah will be able to surmount intra-PDPA animosities and reconcile his accommodationist pro-Muscovite Parcham faction with the militant Khalqi faction, or that his army will continue to be as loyal and effective as it has been to date. Still, he has survived on attempted coup, on 6 March 1990, by then-Defence Minister Lt General Shahnawaz Tanai, a Khalqi; and in a show of determination to bridge the Parcham-Khalqi political divide, he appointed another leading Khalqi, General Mohammed Aslam Watanjar, Defence Minister.

2. *Government of 'National Reconciliation'*. As Gorbachev's Afghan policy evolved, he had hoped that the PDPA could persuade some of the Mujahideen to enter into a coalition government that would include the

Communists. But ever since Najibullah called for 'national reconciliation' in a speech on 1 January 1987, and announced a nationwide cease-fire effective 15 January 1987 (which collapsed soon thereafter), the initiative has attracted few Afghans. It has been interpreted, at least until recently, as a ploy to secure the PDPA's position. Najibullah's innumerable conferences, aimed at starting a dialogue with the opposition, have failed to take hold.

In important measure Moscow has itself to blame. At the time that the Geneva accords were being negotiated, in early 1988, it might have obtained a mutual cut-off of arms to both sides and the formation of an interim government that included the PDPA. Both the Pakistani government of former President Zia ul-Haq and the Reagan White House were receptive to such a course, and their wishes might then have prevailed with the Peshawar Seven (the Mujahideen organisations based in Peshawar). But Moscow's last-minute concessions were too little and too late.

So, too, was Moscow's belated courtship of the exiled King Muhammad Zahir Shah, though one should never say never when trying to predict how Afghans will act. Soviet Deputy Foreign Minister (and ambassador to Afghanistan from 1987 to the summer of 1989) Yulii M. Vorontsov's efforts to induce him to head an interim government were unproductive, but periodic talks are held in Rome between Soviet officials and the King.<sup>8</sup> But the King is unlikely to be able to serve as a bridge between the PDPA and the Mujahideen, because the coalition parties are divided on the issue and are not apt to break ranks over this particular disagreement.

Since mid-summer of 1989, against the background of stalemate on the battlefield, Moscow has intensified diplomatic efforts in the United Nations and elsewhere to push for a political solution. During a visit to Tehran in late July 1989 Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze sought Iran's support for an end to 'foreign interference' in Afghanistan. A week later, in Kabul, he called for an end to the civil war, 'on the basis of reasonable compromises and national unification.'<sup>9</sup> In February 1990, his ten-point proposal set out a framework for a possible settlement.<sup>10</sup> Frequent talks between him and Secretary of State James Baker invariably touch on the Afghan problem. Moscow espouses a mutual cut-off of arms shipments and negotiations leading to a government of 'national reconciliation', and is reported to have dropped its insistence that Najibullah be guaranteed a place in a future Afghan government. For its part, Washington, which had previously demanded Najibullah's removal because of his unacceptability to the Mujahideen, is said to be willing to permit him to run as a candidate for the presidency, provided that he



relinquish control over the government during the interim period prior to scheduled elections. Disagreements between the Soviet and American positions have been narrowing, but the central point of contention remains the issue of 'who is to head the Kabul Government during a transition period leading to elections'.<sup>11</sup>

For the moment, the Peshawar Seven (the coalition of Mujahideen groups), and possibly Pakistan, are reluctant to foreclose the possibility of a Mujahideen military victory. US support, though, is wavering, as Congress becomes increasingly disillusioned with the Mujahideen's internal feuding and the costs of sustaining a war that no longer involves Soviet troops. There is also growing uneasiness over persistent reports of Mujahideen 'involvement in heroin trafficking and arms dealing to rebels in the state of Jammu and Kashmir, in India'.<sup>12</sup> If Najibullah survives the winter of 1990–1991, and if Mujahideen cohesiveness continues to weaken, the option of 'national reconciliation' in some form may not be as unthinkable as it was prior to the Soviet withdrawal.

Thus, the PDPA's retention of power or participation in an interim coalition government depend on a convergence of developments which are no longer considered unlikely:

- the PDPA's ability to hold Kabul and parts of the north;
- a Mujahideen agreement, in the interest of stopping the bloodletting, to power-sharing with the Communists, at least in the early stages;
- agreement of the different political actors to a formula for power-sharing that would be determined by some kind of all-encompassing political gathering, such as a *Loya Jirgah* (Grand Assembly of tribal and other notables);
- effective pressure from outside to force the local contestants to stop fighting.

Either of Moscow's preferred options (that is, the PDPA hanging on or a government of 'national reconciliation') would provide it with maximum leverage for influencing developments and leave uninterrupted economic arrangements and Soviet involvement in the country's economic development; either would allow the Soviet Union to keep advisers in the country, continue efforts at cooption and institution-building, and use KHAD (the secret police) to manipulate political events.

3. *Political Buzkashi*. The third possibility that might permit the Soviets effective use of their assets in Afghanistan would entail a breakdown of the Mujahideen coalition and the eruption of a free-for-all, ushering in a

period of sectarian and tribal fighting and unrest. There is an increasing number of murders involving Mujahideen rivals. A particularly bloody and politically damaging massacre occurred on 9 July 1989, when 30 Mujahideen, including 7 commanders, linked to Ahmad Shah Massoud and the Jamiat-i-Islami Party, were ambushed by members of the rival Hezb-i-Islami Party of Gulbuddin Hekmatyar. Long favoured by Pakistan's President Zia, Hekmatyar has the most to lose from any accommodation between Mujahideen military commanders and Najibullah, because he lacks a regional base inside Afghanistan. The massacre, coupled with his prediction of 2 February 1989, that all Afghanistan's cities would 'fall without an onslaught',<sup>13</sup> damaged his standing in Peshawar and with leading US supporters.

Anarchy and factional struggles for power of this kind would permit Moscow to use KHAD/KGB operatives to further destabilise the country. With a weak government in Kabul local warfare and endemic settling of scores, Moscow could aggravate Afghanistan's ungovernability. The Mujahideen are riven by personal and political rivalries. As long as the outcome of the struggle to determine who rules in Kabul remained uncertain, each group and ambitious personality would seek tactical alliance to secure advantage. The Resistance would be preoccupied with the struggle for power and little attention would be given to the future beyond the Soviet military withdrawal. Without the emergence of a dominant figure among the Mujahideen, the prospect would be for fragmentation along personal and tribal lines.

In such a setting, KHAD/KGB operatives could fuel and unrest. Through bribery, shipments of weapons, assassinations, and propaganda, Moscow could play the 'Great Game' at minimal cost or risk, forestall any return or refugees, hinder reconstruction efforts, and still pose on the diplomatic stage as an advocate of reasonable accommodation. Though conclusive data on the KHAD are hard to obtain, through diverse sources a picture emerges of a well-financed, Soviet-trained organisation, upwards of 27,000 men capable of sustaining an effective campaign of destabilisation.<sup>14</sup> That some tribal conflicts are Soviet-inspired seems probable, but identifying them is difficult. The success of the PDPA in recruiting government militia brigades from among the Uzbeks, the extensive laying of mines, and the increasing politicisation of the tribes (which stems logically from the tradition of tribalising politics in Afghanistan) are suggestive of events in which KHAD's intrusiveness could complicate attempts to establish a stable non-communist leadership in Kabul.

A protracted conflict aggravated by KHAD might enable Moscow to orchestrate an international conference on Afghanistan. During his visit to

India in November 1988, Gorbachev obtained Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi's support for such a plan. In early December, *Pravda* published a statement issued by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs calling for action on the Gorbachev–Gandhi proposal and for examination of the 'various aspects of the situation of a broad-based international footing...including a solution of Afghanistan's domestic problems'.<sup>15</sup> Appealing to a wider constituency of concerned regional and international actors, Gorbachev's professed interest in ensuring Afghanistan's 'sovereignty, territorial integrity, independence and nonaligned character' could also be linked to his attempt to ensure the inclusion of the PDPA in the peace process. And the KHAD-factor is a major unknown, to be considered in any calculation of probable Soviet responses to developing circumstances.

Having elucidated what is a widely-held view, an alternative assessment may be in order. It is possible that too much influence is being accorded to the KHAD. The Soviets have left; if, and when, the Najib regime falls, how viable will KHAD be as an organisation capable of surviving on Afghan soil? Communists are already being eliminated in the villages. Without a Communist leadership controlling Kabul, KHAD operatives may not have the capability for affecting Afghan internal developments for a long time to come. Moreover, on top of their other ills, they are likely to feel betrayed by their KGB mentors, who, in turn, will have little reason to trust people with that attitude.<sup>16</sup>

4. *A moderate nationalist–Islamic coalition.* Among the options, excluding a direct Soviet/Communist role, this would probably be Moscow's choice. It would be foolhardy to attempt to identify 'moderates' among the groups making up the Mujahideen resistance. However, from a Soviet perspective, such parties would be those prepared to accept the following policies or some variant thereof:

- continuation of the economic treaties and agreements that define the Soviet–Afghan economic relationship;
- acceptance of the 1978 treaty of friendship and cooperation; or, failing this, continuation of adherence to the 1921 treaty;
- commitment to a nonaligned foreign policy;
- support for the return of King Zahir Shah.

Such policies would signify a calculated decision to avoid antagonising the USSR, to shape foreign and even domestic policy with a view toward establishing proper relations with Moscow, and not to permit the remembrance of war to dominate the course of reconstruction and diplo-

matic normalisation. Moscow would be apt to continue aid programmes to such a regime, seeing in it the best chance for retaining a presence in a non-communist Afghanistan, but even more important, for ensuring stability along its border with Afghanistan.

The creation of a moderate coalition could take a variety of forms, its composition being less important than its potential cohesiveness. For such a coalition to work a number of developments would have to eventuate:

- the militantly fundamentalist members of the Peshawar Seven would restrain their ambitions and avoid exacerbating existing tensions (or prove to be less influential than expected); Gulbuddin Hekmatyar is the only ‘militant’ of any note right now, and he appears to be losing influence;
- the field commanders, each of whom has in the main been associated with one of the parties in the Peshawar coalition, would continue to follow the political leadership and not strike out on their own for power: for example, Massood would prefer that Burhanuddin Rabbani, to whose Jamiat-i-Islami he is nominally attached, should become an acceptable coalition candidate and emerge as the leader in freely arranged elections;
- Pashtun tribal rivalries would be kept in check, in the interest of an end to the fighting and a return to stability in the country;
- the Pashtun tribes would be amenable to a form of power-sharing with the Tajiks and Uzbeks, who now play a more important role in the overall resistance movement than ever before;
- the political rivals in the Peshawar Seven would subordinate their individual desires for personal power to the pervasive mood in the refugee camps and the countryside, which is for an end to the fighting and a return to their homes and ‘normalcy’, and they would moderate their behaviour in their quest for power, in the interest of economic recovery.

All of this presupposes changes in the Afghan ‘political style’ that few outside observers think likely. Most believe that personal and political rivalries will increasingly dominate the Afghan scene and that in such a setting what will happen and who will come to power in Kabul are completely uncertain.

5. *Confederation based on rule by the local military commanders.* If no one individual or group is able to establish an effective government in Kabul, the local Mujahideen commanders might use their own power base

to establish a regional administration, institutionalise personal rule, and work out a special relationship with the weak central government. Historically, the devolution of power has been the norm in Afghanistan. Throughout most of the decade of fighting against the Soviet/PDPA regime, the different military commanders maintained political ties to one of the Peshawar Seven. In the main, these were ties of convenience, cemented by the flow of weapons and supplies, which, in turn, were regulated by Pakistan. The Russians have withdrawn, but the fighting goes on, and, for the time being, these links remain. But they may soon weaken or break. The individual commanders, having grown accustomed to exercising authority in their domains, may downgrade a Peshawar connection and think primarily of entrenching their own position. In doing so, they would be merely confirming what has in fact been the situation for a number of years, namely, the *de facto* ascendancy by a local commander in a particular region or locality, for example, Ahmad Shah Massood in the Panjsher, Abdul Haq in the environs of Kabul, and Ismail Khan in the Herat area.

Little is known of the military commanders' commitments to their respective political groups in Peshawar. Since few of the Peshawar Seven have power rooted in a territorial/tribal base, an abrupt turnabout, not unknown in Afghan history, in the loyalty of individual commanders, could occur and have far-reaching consequences for future efforts at building coalitions at the tribal level. In this situation, the degree of each commander's influence would rest on his strength with a particular ethnic or tribal connection; for example, according to conventional wisdom, Ahmad Massood could not aspire to power at the national level because, being a Tajik, he would not be acceptable to the Pashtun majority.

There is little to warrant optimism that the commanders will readily accept the political leadership of the Islamic Interim Government of Afghanistan, the government-in-exile established by the Peshawar Seven on 23 February 1989. The interim regime, elected by a consultative council, or *shura*, does not represent the Iranian-based Shiites (who demanded twice the number of seats the Peshawar Seven were willing to concede) nor does it adequately represent commanders inside Afghanistan. This has engendered considerable scepticism among a number of commanders. One of them, Adam Khan, tribal chief and military commander of Paktia province, told a Western journalist that 'the seven leaders – all of them are selfish. They want themselves to be in power and have a lot of property. They are not our enemy. We have always obeyed them. But now that they are selfish, we disagree.'<sup>17</sup>

Several dozen key commanders could constitute the core of an emerging confederal or cantonal system of power-sharing. In the course of waging a successful resistance struggle, they have created administrative structures capable of mobilising popular support, levying taxes, enforcing tribal law, and developing cadres. The essentials of an integrated grassroots political order exist in many localities. The catalyst for a return to localism could be disenchantment with political bickering by the Peshawar Seven. Prolonged failure of a government, deemed to be legitimate, to take power in Kabul could also speed up the pressures toward de facto confederation.

The reaction of the eight Iran-based Shiite resistance groups may also have an effect on the emergence of a confederal system. Constituting about 10 to 15 per cent of the population of Afghanistan, and located mainly in Hazarajat in the centre of the country, the Shiites have in the past been down trodden and powerless. An ideologically activist Iran has strengthened their bargaining position, but not until early 1989 were formal negotiations started between them and the Peshawar Seven. At the shura leading to the establishment of the Islamic Interim Government of Afghanistan, they demanded a greater share of the seats and authority than the Sunni groups were prepared to grant. At present, they remain on their own, closely tied to Tehran. With Soviet–Iranian relations on the upswing, Moscow hopes that Tehran will foster talks between the Shiite groups and the Najibullah regime, a circumstance that would encourage greater participation by Tehran in efforts to bring about a political settlement, and that could help Najibullah.

Moscow would find a confederal devolution of power to its liking. Predicated on the basis of a weak government in Kabul, confederation along some form of ethnolinguistic lines would mean that no non-communist government could do much to generate a national policy hostile to Soviet interests; that Moscow would be given wide latitude to play off one region or tribal group against another; and that KHAD operatives would be usable for intrigue and other covert activities. However, the danger for Moscow is that Afghanistan might turn more into a Lebanon than into a Switzerland.

6. *Establishment of a fundamentalist regime.* This would be the least desirable outcome for Moscow, heightening unease about a spill-over effect into Soviet Central Asia. It has been postulated that the defeat of Russian military power in Afghanistan will have a transnational ideological–religious resonance among the dormant nationalist sentiments of Turkic-speaking Muslims (Uzbeks, Kirghiz, Kazakhs, Tajiks,

Turkomans) of Soviet Central Asia. The concern may not be immediate, but distant problems have a way of becoming troublesome – and in unanticipated ways.

For a long time, Khomeini's Revolution did not appear to have a discernible impact on Soviet Shiites. However, the outburst of ethnic violence in April 1988 between Armenians and Azeris over the Armenian enclave of Nagorno-Karabakh in Azerbaijan showed how thin was the Soviet gloss. Soviet Azeris marched through the streets flaunting portraits of Khomeini, suggesting that if Gorbachev's permissive policy resulted in a further exacerbation of ethnic unrest then Soviet Muslims might look elsewhere for religious-political symbolism to counterpose to Moscow's authority. Azeri nationalism is assuming explosive proportions to end a major rail strike, the Communist Party leader of Azerbaijan accepted an agreement with an 'informal' (non-official) political group (the Azerbaijani Popular Front), in which he recognised, among other things, Azerbaijan's right to secede from the Soviet Union.<sup>18</sup> All of this cannot help but add to Moscow's nervousness over a possible fundamentalist takeover in Kabul.

In the past, Moscow's criticism of the fundamentalist contenders was directed particularly against Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, founder of one of the Hezb-i-Islami groups. Charismatic and controversial, Hekmatyar heads the best organised of the political parties comprising the Peshawar Seven. Amply supported by the Pakistan government during Zia's tenure and by Saudi Arabia, he has made clear his intention to establish an Islamic state, but without specifying what this would entail other than opposition to a return of King Zahir Shah or the secular orientation of most Western-trained Afghans. Moscow found him a convenient whipping figure in the past, partly because it could exploit his rivals' jealousy over Hekmatyar's privileged access to guns and funds.

As it relates to the emerging situation in Afghanistan, Soviet criticism of Hekmatyar, in particular, and of the fundamentalists, in general, may be less an articulation of anxiety than ploy to sow suspicion and division among the Mujahideen: Soviet analysts counsel against oversimplifying 'the complex, contradictory, painful processes which determine to considerable extent the state and conduct of the Afghan opposition today'.<sup>19</sup> After all, for various reasons, the Soviet Union is now actively courting Iran's fundamentalist regime. Why not, then, some future fundamentalist regime in Kabul? Any regime, however hostile at first, will have to come to terms with the geopolitical reality of having the Soviet Union as a neighbour; and Moscow has demonstrated its own readiness to come to terms with any regime in power along its periphery.

Moreover, Hekmatyar's situation is less promising. The death of President Zia in a mysterious aircraft explosion in 17 August 1988; the return of Pakistan to a freely elected government in November 1988; the decision of Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto in late May 1989 to dismiss the powerful chief of the military's Inter-Service Intelligence, which had been responsible for distributing US arms to Mujahideen groups; and the outcry at the massacre of Jamiat-i-Islami leaders by Hekmatyar's group in July 1989 – these have all had the effect of diminishing Hekmatyar's status at home and abroad. With Russians by and large gone,<sup>20</sup> he has been deprived of the main issue attracting supporters, and may lose out in the ongoing struggle for power because, though a Pashtun, he lacks a strong tribal base. He is thoroughly mistrusted by other groups, moderate and militant alike. Yunis Khalis, a Pashtun, who heads the other Hezb-i-Islami party, and Burhanuddin Rabbani, a Tajik, of Jamiat-i-Islami, may prove more important fundamentalist actors because of their solid ties to Pashtun tribal leaders.

A more general question to be asked of those who suggest the Soviet Union is uneasy over the possible advent to power in Kabul of a fundamentalist leadership is this: Is Islam itself undergoing a revival in Soviet Central Asia or do the manifestations of Islamic sentiment fall into the category of expressions of long repressed ethnic hostility toward the ruling Russian power? Is Islamic fundamentalism really a political force in the Soviet Union? The Muslims of Soviet Central Asia are preponderantly Sunni. Their pressure on Moscow would more likely stem from ethnic nationalism, not religious fundamentalism. Accordingly, since Afghanistan is primarily Sunni, not Shiite like Iran, were a fundamentalist regime to emerge it would be apt to look to Saudi Arabia, not Iran; and it would, once entrenched, be preoccupied with institutionalising power, not proselytising.

## IMPLICATIONS FOR SOUTH ASIA

In forging a new relationship with an as yet unknown but assuredly hostile non-communist Afghan regime, or with a weak coalition government in which the PDPA was involved, Moscow's principal aim for the foreseeable future would be the achievement of stability. One potential source of stability inheres in the existing interlocking network of economic agreements and interests. Another, mentioned periodically by Soviet commentators, is the 1921 Soviet–Afghan treaty, held to be a 'document of historic importance'.<sup>21</sup> Though this is an exaggeration, the



treaty nonetheless does contain provisions for mutual recognition, friendly relations, and a neutrality that obligates Afghanistan not to become a military threat to the Soviet Union.<sup>22</sup> All of these considerations are congruent with the national interests of India and Pakistan.

In the context of South Asian politics and alignments, the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Afghanistan is the pivotal development on which a more stable strategic-political environment can be created. Both India and Pakistan see advantages. India welcomes the removal of a mildly embarrassing issue from the Indo-Soviet relationship; it would not be unhappy to see the PDPA, or a pro-Soviet government in Kabul that was prepared to normalise relations with the Soviet Union, remain in power. Any such regime would be cool toward Islamabad – and this would suit Indian aims. Pakistan, for its part, would like the five to six million Afghan refugees in the country to return to their homes; but it realises that this is unlikely to happen, as long as the civil war continues. Still, it is edging toward better relations with Moscow and is probably prepared to coexist with the PDPA regime or some variant thereof, though without seeming to embrace such a regime. Better relations with the Soviet Union is in Pakistan's long-term security interest. The Pakistan-China connection may not be as reliable in a period when Sino-Soviet relations are on the mend. A greater degree of diplomatic flexibility in Pakistan's approach to the Soviet Union should contribute to a relaxation of regional tensions.

Once the situation inside Afghanistan sorts itself out, and this may be a matter of years rather than months, the web of relationships in the area will grow more complex and less geared to a predominant military character. In such a setting, the Soviet Union will, like everyone else, be responding *ad hoc* to the challenges of unregulated and unanticipated change.

## NOTES

1. In early October 1990, the Mujahideen captured Tirinkot, the provincial capital of Uruzgan, in central Afghanistan (see *New York Times*, 6 October 1990).
2. Alvin Z. Rubinstein, *Soviet Policy Toward Turkey, Iran, and Afghanistan* (New York: Praeger, 1982) p. 129.
3. Foreign Broadcast Information Service/Soviet Union (hereafter referred to as FBIS/SOV), 29 August 1988, p. 25.
4. FBIS/SOV, 23 September 1988, p. 27.
5. FBIS/SOV, 2 November 1988, p. 25.
6. An article in *Krasnaya zvezda* noted: 'Today there are 320 industrial, power engineering, transport, agricultural, and other facilities on the Afghan

economic map that have been constructed with aid from the Soviet Union. Some 140 of them have already been commissioned. The largest are the two gas fields in the north of Afghanistan, a plant producing nitrogenous fertilizers at Mazar-e Sharif, the "Naglu" hydroelectric power station that supplies Kabul with electricity, Jangalak's automobile repair plant, petroleum product storage and distribution centers, more than 1,500 km of highways, and many other facilities. The facilities constructed with USSR aid provide 100 percent of the gas extracted, carbamide produced, and large-panel housing construction items made, 60 percent of the electricity generated, and so on' (FBIS/SOV, 17 November 1988, p. 21).

7. *New York Times*, 31 March 1989.
8. FBIS/SOV, 13 September 1989, p. 1.
9. FBIS/SOV, 7 August 1989, p. 23.
10. FBIS/SOV, 15 February 1990, pp. 28–31.
11. *New York Times*, 5 June 1990.
12. *New York Times*, 30 September 1990.
13. *New York Times*, 3 February 1989.
14. For example, *Insight*, 5 December 1988.
15. *Pravda*, 3 December 1988.
16. For this insight I am indebted to Anthony Arnold.
17. Steve Coll, *Washington Post*, 24 July 1989.
18. *New York Times*, 12 October 1989.
19. *Krasnaya zvezda*, 13 August 1988, as translated in FBIS/SOV, 16 August 1988, pp. 36–38.
20. The Bush administration has stated that Soviet military personnel are still performing a combat function in Afghanistan, specifically, that 'all functions connected with the security, storage and launch of Scud missiles are handled by Soviet advisers' dressed in Afghan uniforms (*New York Times*, 10 October 1989).
21. FBIS/SOV, 17 March 1988, p. 26.
22. Jan F. Triska and Robert F. Slusser, *The Theory, Law, and Policy of Soviet Treaties* (Stanford, Cal.: Stanford University Press, 1962) p. 264.

# 6 Indian Security Policy in the 1990s: New Risks and Opportunities

Raju G. C. Thomas

## GLOBAL CHANGES AND REGIONAL CONSTANTS

The nature of global politics and the accompanying security concerns are being transformed in the 1990s. On the other hand, the nature of regional politics and security concerns in South Asia appear to remain basically the same, although the intensity of some of the traditional issues have increased. While the end of the Cold War has ushered in an era of cooperation between the United States and the Soviet Union (together with their European allies), the conflict issues that have plagued South Asia in the past – religious antagonism and violence, territorial separatism and its spillover effects, the conventional arms buildup, and the threat of nuclear weapons and missile proliferation – continue to keep South Asia near the edge of political instability and war. To be sure, unlike Indo-Pakistani relations, relations between India and China have considerably improved and may even revert back to the era of cordiality of the 1950s. But this change too constitutes the continuation of one of the past scenarios on the subcontinent.

The transformation in the nature of global issues and the persistence of various regional issues, not merely in South Asia but also in the Middle East and other parts of the developing world, should not be surprising. While regional issues in South Asia had been affected by the politics of the Cold War, the sources of conflict here were essentially non-ideological and regional in content. However, even as conflict issues and politics in South Asia remain 'business as usual', the new global politics tend to affect and shape the politics of South Asia. For one thing, the continuation of political and military support from the great powers, to the states of South Asia on various issues can no longer be taken for granted. Thus, for example, India cannot count on the Soviet Union for its veto vote in the Security Council on the Kashmir issue, or for continued military sales of weapons and technology to upgrade its

firepower. Similarly, Pakistan can no longer count on the United States for continued economic and military support to pursue its policy of maintaining a military balance with India, or of gaining sympathy for its Kashmir policy objectives.

Moreover, the politics and economics of the Southwest, Central and Southeast Asian regions have begun to impinge increasingly on the politics of South Asia so as to make issues more trans-regional than in the earlier decades. Whether it is the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, the earlier Vietnamese invasion of Cambodia, the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, the arms buildups in the Middle East, OPEC oil pricing policies, unrest in the Chinese province of Tibet, or Islamic revolutions in the Soviet republics and Chinese provinces, all of this extra-regional turbulence tends to produce waves or ripple effects in the South Asian region. Regional spillover effects that transcend the traditional regional arenas across the south-central regions of the Asian continent from the Mediterranean to the South China Sea are likely to substantially alter the nature and the objectives of South Asian politics.

The 'political-economic' balance of stability or instability is another new factor that needs to be assessed in South Asia. While the conventional balance of power and the potential nuclear balance of terror in South Asia are important in determining questions of strategic stability in the region, the stability of governments and regimes, of political systems and economic conditions, are also crucial in understanding the likelihood of war or peace. Unstable governments, armed insurgencies, and other forms of internal violence, especially in the border provinces of the country, and the deterioration or collapse of a nation's economic health, could prove critical in the conduct of a state's security policies and defence programmes. Moreover, the familiar proposition that a weak government faced with internal strife may seek foreign military adventures to divert attention or generate nationalism among the domestic public, are allegations that may be applied to both India and Pakistan.

India's security policies, as it enters the 1990s and moves towards the twenty-first century, will be conditioned by the above changes and constants. This chapter will examine some of the new risks and opportunities that face India in the future under the following themes: explanations for the growth of Indian military power; India's accounting of the strategic military balance in South Asia, both conventional and nuclear; the effects of global and 'transregional' politics on India's defence strategies; and the contributing effects of volatile domestic political and economic conditions on regional stability.

## EXPLANATIONS FOR THE GROWTH OF INDIAN MILITARY POWER

Although no wars have been fought on the subcontinent since the last Indo-Pakistani war of 1971, India's military power has continued to grow steadily over the ensuing two decades. The sources of this Indian military expansion are varied and its justification has been questioned both at home and abroad. Overall, three interpretations may be provided here on the causes and the nature of India's military growth.

First, there is the argument, especially stemming from the Government of India, that relatively there is little or no growth in Indian military capabilities. The percentage of the GNP allocated to defence in India during the 1980s has remained about the same compared to earlier decades, and continues to be well below the defence allocations of Pakistan, and countries further north and west in East Asia and the Middle East. Thus, India allocated 3.0 and 3.8 per cent of its GNP to defence in 1985 and 1987, a range that is about the same as during the years following the 1962 Sino-Indian war. In the same years, Pakistan allocated 6.9 and 7.4 per cent, South Korea 5.1 and 5.7 per cent, Taiwan 6.6 and 6.3 per cent, Iran 25.9 and 26.8 per cent, Israel 12.8 and 16.4 per cent, and Egypt 8.6 and 3.0 per cent. However, China's allocations had dropped to 2.2 and 1.9 per cent in 1985 and 1987, a considerable drop from their earlier (though unreliable) estimates of 10 per cent of the GNP. Similarly, compared to India's military expenditure of \$10 per capita in 1988, Pakistan spent \$26 per capita, Egypt \$61, South Korea \$147, Taiwan \$192, Iraq \$433, Israel \$821, and the United States \$1061. But again, China only spent \$5 per capita in the same year.

According to a second and opposing argument, annual defence allocations expressed as a percentage of the GNP, and annual per capita military expenditures, do not adequately demonstrate a country's military capabilities. While the above comparative estimates of defence budgetary allocations may not show a radical change in the purpose and direction of Indian defence policy, there still may occur dramatic increases in force capabilities and deployments. Certain economic conditions and budgetary practices in India have tended to conceal the real growth in military capabilities.

The growth of the Indian economy, at an average rate of about 5 per cent of the GNP since 1979 (and at almost 9 per cent in 1988), means that, despite a steady annual allocation of 3 to 4 per cent of the GNP to defence since 1962, the absolute amounts allocated since 1979 are greater than during the previous decades of war and turbulence.<sup>1</sup> A prosperous

economy automatically induces a generous defence allocation even if the percentage of the GNP that is allocated remains approximately the same. This trend may be seen more readily in the relatively large annual increases in resource allocations to Indian defence over the previous year, despite the steady state in the economic burden of defence relative to the GNP. For example, after taking inflation into consideration, there was an increase of 27.3 per cent in defence allocations from 1985 to 1986, and of 21.1 per cent from 1986 to 1987.<sup>2</sup>

Again, although there was a decrease in the annual budgetary allocation, by 3.6 per cent from 1987 to 1988, this does not take into account the cost of Indian military operations between 1987 and 1989 in Sri Lanka, in the Siachen Glacier, and in the Maldives. Nor does it include the increased foreign exchange component of overseas weapons purchases which is provided by the Ministry of Finance, some of the defence research and development costs that are also undertaken by the Department of Science and Technology, and the allocations to the Departments of Atomic Energy and Space, much of which carry military applications.<sup>3</sup> No doubt, such expenses were not included in earlier defence allocations either, but the magnitude of these related expenses have increased considerably in recent years.

While not denying the significant growth in Indian military capabilities in recent years, a third perspective seeks explanations in underlying domestic political and social conditions. As in other advanced industrialised countries, rivalry among the armed forces for a greater strategic role in the defence of India, and the accompanying competitive claims to the Indian defence allocation, have a tendency to bloat the annual defence budget along the margins and to highlight the procurement of highly advanced and, therefore, more controversial weapons. While this may not add significantly to the annual defence allocations, the adjustments in weapons procurement in favour of the more high-profile services, the Indian Air Force and the Indian Navy, tend to give the Indian military as a whole, greater international visibility. For example, the Indian Navy's acquisition of its second aircraft carrier, the INS Viraat, and its first nuclear-powered submarine, the INS Chakra, have tended to create the impression abroad of spectacular military growth in India. In reality, the changes may have been quite modest.

This kind of internally-driven autonomous military growth is also spurred by the growth in domestic civilian technological capabilities in the fields of aeronautics, shipbuilding, electronics, computers, nuclear energy and space technology. As the technological capability to build advanced aircraft, frigates, nuclear weapons and missiles becomes

possible, strategic rationalisations are also advanced demonstrating the need for such weapons. Thus civilian technological capabilities become converted into military capabilities sparking similar or greater weapons procurements among India's adversaries, thereby justifying the initial Indian decisions to produce these weapons. This is not unlike the 'Mad Military Momentum' that characterised the US-USSR arms race during the Cold War. Thus, for example, the technological feasibility of developing nuclear weapon and missile capabilities in India make them strategically desirable, thereby generating similar demands in Pakistan and causing the upward regional spiral in military capabilities in South Asia.

## INDIA AND THE CONVENTIONAL MILITARY BALANCE IN SOUTH ASIA

Unlike the earlier decades, when India faced the hostility of both Pakistan and China and the likelihood of war on both its western and northern fronts, in the 1990s the threat from China appears to be diminishing just as the threat from Pakistan appears to be increasing. No doubt, like the Kashmir dispute between India and Pakistan, the Sino-Indian border dispute has not yet been resolved. But whereas 'time' appears to be resolving the latter problem along the lines of actual territorial control by the two sides, the Kashmir problem, which had appeared to be moving in the same direction, was suddenly revived in 1989 following the revolt in the valley of Kashmir against central government political interference and manipulation.

In determining the military balance in South Asia, the traditional perspective of a joint and simultaneous Sino-Pakistani threat may seem less likely in the future. Just as the Indo-Soviet quasi-alliance relationship appears to have eroded and dissipated with the end of the global Cold War, the Sino-Pakistani military alliance appears also headed for the same fate. This is reinforced by the growing cordiality in the Sino-Indian relationship, which in the future may prove to be more important politically for Asia and the world, than the Indo-Soviet relationship. Meanwhile, Pakistan's search for allies and military support may be increasingly concentrated in the Islamic Middle East.

Apart from these potentially changing global and regional strategic alignments, the 'balance of power' in the region is also going to be determined by the degree of domestic political stability among the countries of the region. Weak and unstable governments, especially those lacking political legitimacy among the people, and internal armed

insurgencies and terrorist movements, could reduce the effectiveness of relative military capabilities in the region. For example, a war between India and Pakistan, or India and China, must take into account the anti-national armed resistance in Indian Punjab and Kashmir, in Pakistan's Sindh province, and in China's Tibetan province. Moreover, not only would terrorism and insurgencies in these border states be crucial in determining the outcome of war, other violent protest and/or separatist movements further away from the battlefield could prove important if this were to drain the ability of the state to conduct the war.

In the first instance, the instability of the political system or the government in office could debilitate the conduct of not only domestic policy but also foreign policy. Failures to develop adequate and acceptable constitutional systems at home, violent protest movements against military or civilian authoritarian regimes, the inability of a party to muster a clear majority in parliament and the need to rely on allied parties in an unstable coalitional arrangement, or a weakening economy, are factors that will affect the conduct of defence and war. The defeat of Pakistan in the Indo-Pakistani war of 1971 may be attributed partly to the failure to develop an adequate constitutional arrangement acceptable to both its western and eastern wings, and partly to the weak military regime of General Yahya Khan that existed at the time. Similarly, another Indo-Pakistani war in the 1990s must take into account the instability and weaknesses of the coalition non-Congress governments of V. P. Singh, Chandra Shekhar, and their likely successors.

In the second instance, insurgencies in Punjab, Kashmir, Assam, Nagaland, Mizoram, Tripura and potentially Andhra Pradesh in India, could reduce the political and military effectiveness of the state to conduct external wars. Similarly, the potential revival of separatist movements in Baluchistan and among the Pathans of the Northwest Frontier Province in Pakistan, or a potential pro-democratic and anti-communist revolution in China, could affect the political 'balance of power' in the region. The swift defeat of Pakistan in the two-week Indo-Pakistani war of 1971, for instance, was clearly precipitated by the revolution in its eastern wing and the insurgency operations of the Bengali liberation forces, the Mukti Bahini.

Subject to the above political intangibles in South Asia, the military balance and the outcome of war must also take into account (what I would like to call) the three 'T's – technology, terrain, time and training.

From the Indian standpoint in particular, the first 'T', the technological advantage in weapons systems on either side, is of greater significance than any simplistic 'bean counting' of guns, tanks, aircraft, and ships. The



qualitative technological military balance has fluctuated since the arms race began after Indian independence in 1947. When Pakistan acquired the M-47/48 Patton tanks, F-86 Sabre and F-104 Starfighter combat aircraft from the United States under the SEATO and CENTO defence pacts, India went out and purchased British and French Centurion and AMX-10 tanks, the Mystère-IVA and Hunter Mk-56 fighters, and the B-1 Canberra bombers. The balance of technological quality lay with Pakistan. But as the American-supplied weapons to Pakistan began to deteriorate and become obsolete and as Pakistan had to rely more on Chinese tanks and aircraft, the technological balance began to shift towards India. While India continued to deploy the British and French weapons, it had also acquired Soviet T-54/55 tanks and Indian-made Mig-21s. However, the Soviet-supplied Sukhoi-7B fighter-bombers and the Indian-made HF-24 Marut fighters were of substantially inferior quality compared to Pakistani acquisitions of French Mirage-III and IV aircraft acquire just prior to the 1971 Indo-Pakistani war.

Through much of the 1970s and early 1980s, India's technological superiority began to grow, with acquisitions of the Anglo-French Jaguar fighter-bombers, the Soviet MiG-23 combat aircraft, and the Soviet T-72 tanks. However, the renewed American military aid to Pakistan of F-16 fighters, the upgraded M-47A tanks and the TOW anti-tank missiles appeared to provide the technological advantage over Indian acquisitions of French Mirage-2000s and Soviet MiG-29s.

While swings in the balance of weapons technology may appear subjective and controversial, nevertheless, even where one side may be perceived to possess such an advantage, whether real or imagined, this may add to the psychological advantage during combat. A well-trained Pakistani pilot who has undergone 'Top Gun' training in the United States to fly the F-16 fighters may have the distinct psychological advantage in combat over an Indian pilot. This was at least one of the factors that favoured Israeli pilots flying American F-5 Phantoms, over Egyptian pilots flying Soviet MiG-21 Fishbeds, during the 1967 Arab-Israeli war, and similarly, Israeli pilots flying American F-15 and F-16 fighters against Syrian pilots flying MiG-23s over the Bekaa Valley in the war of 1981. Moreover, the advantage in electronic countermeasures can prove crucial in combat on land, in the air and at sea. Again, one can see the fluctuating advantages in the Middle East where the Israelis held superiority in the 1967 war, lost it during the 1973 war when Soviet supplied SAM-6s proved devastating, but regained it decisively during the 1981 war when advanced Soviet SAMs were jammed effectively through electronic counter-countermeasures. Similarly, there are fears in India that Pakistan's

search for Airborne Warning and Control Systems (AWACS) and other electronic countermeasures could swing the technological military balance away from India.

As regards the second 'T' – the terrain on which wars must be fought – India perceives a disadvantage in conducting wars on land against Pakistan in Kashmir, and against China along the Indian borders with Tibet in Ladakh and Arunachal Pradesh. India has recognised that defence of Indian Kashmir against Pakistan must entail opening other fronts in Punjab and Rajasthan. Although the first Indo-Pakistani war of 1947–8 was confined to Kashmir alone, the difficulty of defending this state along the 1949 ceasefire boundaries without opening fronts in Punjab and Rajasthan were realised during the 1965 and 1971 Indo-Pakistani wars. Indian defence against a Pakistani military thrust towards Srinagar almost automatically entails an Indian military offensive towards Pakistan's two major cities of Lahore and Karachi.

Similarly, India's security planners have recognised that defence of India's borders with Tibet can only be a 'holding operation' until external support is received from the great powers to deter any further Chinese military action and territorial drives into the Assam plains. Hence, India has not sought to raise more than 11 mountain divisions equipped with light transport vehicles, mobile mountain guns, and light ammunition. This defence programme was completed within five years of the 1962 Sino-India war and has remained steady ever since. The alternative to this form of limited ground defence against China, is to raise the regional military stakes to an Indian nuclear retaliatory deterrent posture, a policy that has been envisaged on several occasions but has not yet been implemented.

As regards the third 'T' – the timing and the time duration of wars on the subcontinent – these two related factors tend to have a substantial influence on the conduct and outcome of wars. Apart from the first Indo-Pakistani war, which lasted from October 1947 until the cease-fire in March 1949, the other two Indo-Pakistani wars, of 1965 and 1971, were of three and two weeks respectively. The 1962 Sino-Indian war lasted from early October of 1962 until the first week of December, a duration of less than two months. Quantitative military superiority may have little effect in such short-duration wars, especially if the advantage of surprise rests with the attacker. Under these circumstances, the quality of front-line battle systems and equipment may prove decisive. Thus, it may not be how many soldiers, tanks, aircraft and ships exist in India and Pakistan, as much as how (say) American F-16 combat aircraft would fare against Soviet MiG-29 aircraft, or M-60 tanks against T-72 tanks, in a war of less than two months. Surely, the timing and the duration of Arab-Israeli wars,

in 1948–9, 1967, 1971 and 1981, played a decisive part in the eventual outcome. The overwhelming size of Arab populations and military hardware relative to that of Israel were much less relevant, except where the war tended to be protracted. Only in wars of attrition, such as the Iran–Iraq war of 1981–9, will overwhelming quantitative superiority in men and material make a difference, and even here technological superiority could tilt the balance.

With the above qualifying and modifying factors in mind, the conventional military balance between India and Pakistan may be roughly in the ratio of 2 to 1. In 1989, the Indian Army consisted of approximately 1.2 million military personnel organised into 5 Regional Commands and 10 Corps Headquarters.<sup>4</sup> This included 19 infantry divisions, 11 mountain divisions, 2 armoured divisions, and one mechanised division. These major formations were supplemented by 8 armoured, 7 infantry, one mountain, and 3 independent artillery brigades. The Indian Army carried 3150 Main Battle Tanks (MBT). Organised into 5 Air Commands, the Indian Air Force comprised 115,000 men and carried 836 combat aircraft and 12 armoured helicopters distributed among 50 squadrons. There are another 186 planes as part of 12 transport squadrons, and 140 helicopters as part of 6 helicopter squadrons. Likewise, the Indian Navy had expanded to 47,000 military personnel organised under 3 Naval Commands headquartered at the ports of Bombay, Fort Cochin and Vishakapatnam. The Navy included two carriers, 5 destroyers, 21 frigates, 17 submarines, including one that was nuclear-powered, and another 34 patrol and coastal combat vessels.

Compared with the growth of the Indian armed forces, the Pakistani military consisted of 480,000 men in the Army, organised into 7 Corps Headquarters that included 14 infantry divisions, 2 armoured divisions, 5 independent armoured brigades, 4 independent infantry brigades, 8 artillery brigades, and 3 anti-aircraft artillery brigades. The Pakistan Army had 1750 Main Battle Tanks. There were 25,000 men in the Air Force equipped with 451 combat aircraft organised into 12 fighter squadrons. There were another 2 transport squadrons comprising 15 planes. The Navy had 15,000 men and included 7 destroyers, 10 frigates, 6 submarines, and another 29 patrol and coastal combat vessels.

The Indo-Pakistani balance of military forces on the ground measured in terms of military personnel is 1.2 million to 480,000 (ratio of 2.5 : 1), and measured in terms of the main battle tanks is 3150 to 1750 (ratio of 1.8 : 1). Since 11 divisions are deployed against China, and some sections of Indian infantry divisions are intended for deployment in the troubled northeast sector where there are several separatist movements, the actual

order of battle against the Pakistan Army was only marginally in favour of India. On the other hand, the qualitative military balance on the ground may actually be shifting in Pakistan's favour as it proceeds to acquire American TOW anti-tank missiles and the M-1 Abrams tanks, as compared to the quality and effectiveness of recent Indian procurements such as the Indian-made T-72 tanks of Soviet design.

Perhaps a comparison of India's military exercise in 1987 (Operation 'Brasstacks') and Pakistan's exercise in 1989 (Operation 'Zarb-e-Momin' or 'the Strike of the Faithful') may be suggestive of the likely order of battle on the ground. The Pakistani exercise was an even larger scale than India's earlier exercise, utilising more than half of its 480,000 regular land forces.<sup>5</sup> Indeed, if Pakistani reservists, numbering as many as its regular forces and concentrated mainly in Pakistani Punjab, are taken into account, then the numerical advantage may even lie with Pakistan. Add to this the threat of the Pakistani Army Chief-of-Staff, General Aslam Beg, to pursue a strategy of 'offensive defence' in future wars with India, and the tilt may seem even more pronounced.<sup>6</sup> Since the bulk of Indian army divisions are stationed in central and southern India, Pakistan may carry the advantage in any preemptive conventional lightning strike across the border.

Meanwhile, the 11 mountain divisions intended for defence of the Himalayan frontiers with China have remained relatively unchanged since this deployment was first conceived following the war with China in 1962. China has approximately the same number of forces deployed or intended for deployment along its frontiers with India. Note, however, that in the early 1990s both India and China had begun to reduce their military deployments along their Himalayan borders, signifying a considerable thaw in Sino-Indian relations.<sup>7</sup>

The numerical superiority of India in the air is not in question. India carries an advantage in combat aircraft of 836 to 451 (ratio of 1.8:1), and has 115,000 uniformed personnel to Pakistan's 25,000 (ratio of 4.6:1). Unlike the Indian Army, air-force deployments would appear to be primarily directed against Pakistan, since Indian military deployments against China appear intended to 're-fight' the last war of 1962, where the Indian Air Force was not engaged in a combat role. However, numerical balances – or imbalances – do not always reflect the qualitative nature of the aircraft on either side, which has fluctuated on the subcontinent between the two sides. India, for instance, has claimed that the introduction of the 40 American F-16 Falcons with the Pakistan Air Force (with the promise of another 60 in 1990) constituted a qualitative leap forward in the Indo-Pakistani military balance compared to the Indian procurement of French and Soviet aircraft.<sup>8</sup>

Despite all the international concerns expressed about India's naval expansion, India has only 45 combat vessels and 34 patrol vessels compared with Pakistan's 23 and 29 (ratio of 2:1 and 1.2:1). This 'superiority' would appear meaningless when measured against the disparate lengths of the two countries' respective coastlines, and India's three major clusters of island territories in the Bay of Bengal and the Arabian Sea – the Lakshwadeep, Andaman and Nicobar Islands. India has argued that its expansion at sea is merely to compensate for past neglect and to produce a better internal 'military' balance among its armed services.

It is important to note that India's naval expansion is generally unrelated to the traditional Sino-Pakistani threat.<sup>9</sup> Unlike the Indian Army and Indian Air Force, the Indian Navy cannot point to a specific and more immediate threat to national security, where naval forces could play a decisive or substantial role. The threat from Pakistan was always perceived to come by land and air. Pakistan's more recent naval expansion is largely a belated response to the growth of Indian naval power. The threat from China is perceived to be primarily land-based and (to a lesser extent) from conventional air power and intermediate-range nuclear-tipped missiles. The Chinese Navy does not operate west of the Straits of Malacca in the Bay of Bengal and southern Indian Ocean region.

The steady growth of the Indian Navy since the mid 1960s has been based on a wider strategic perspective that included a mix of four distant and proximate objectives: to establish 'sea power' befitting a nation of its size and central peninsular location; to defend India's growing sea-borne trade on the high seas; to improve India's coastal defence capability within its 12-mile territorial waters; and to protect its potential mineral resources within its 200-mile economic zone.<sup>10</sup>

## INDIA AND THE STRATEGIC NUCLEAR BALANCE IN SOUTH ASIA

A major complicating factor in assessing the military balance in South Asia is the potential impact of nuclear weapons and missile capabilities. Both countries have acquired the technological capability to produce nuclear weapons. India tested an atomic device in 1974 but refrained thereafter from proceeding with a nuclear weapons programme. On the other hand, Pakistan has been threatening to carry out a nuclear test during the 1980s – at least implicitly – but has thus far (November 1990) refrained from carrying out that threat. With the launching of 'Agni' in May 1989, and Intermediate-Range Ballistic Missile, and with the second test-

launching of 'Prithvi' in September 1989, a surface-to-surface missile, India has demonstrated that it is virtually a nuclear-weapons power with delivery systems short of actual deployment.<sup>11</sup> Apart from the existing five nuclear weapons powers, only Israel, with its Jericho-II missiles, possesses such IRBM capability. The 'Agni' test has produced domestic pressures to embark on further testing, with accompanying external pressures from the United States to conform to the American-sponsored Missile Technology Control Regime.<sup>12</sup>

The strategic repercussions of these developments are as yet unclear. Pakistan has already started to seek similar capabilities in nuclear weapons and missile systems. However, more significant will be the effects of these Indian military programmes on the Sino-Indian military balance. Whereas at one time the Chinese threat was considered likely to be limited to another Himalayan border war, the growing Indian capability in nuclear weapons and missile systems will make Chinese capabilities in these areas more relevant and significant in measuring the military balance between the two countries. Indeed, the distant Chinese nuclear threat to India that prevailed in the past will have been brought nearer with India's growing nuclear and missile capabilities.

Despite the Indian pro-bomb lobby's argument that the nuclearisation of South Asia would be to India's advantage, on balance it would be Pakistan that would gain the advantage from this situation. After threatening to respond to the Chinese nuclear buildup and then eventually carrying out that threat in 1974, India is compelled now to shift its attention to the Pakistani nuclear threat. Rather than having to ask what the Pakistani reaction would be if India responded to a Chinese nuclear threat (as in the pre-1974 situation), the question faced by India today is how the prevailing Chinese nuclear threat would be affected if it were to respond to Pakistan's nuclear programme. The target of India's nuclear weapons policy and the anticipated third-party consequences of going nuclear have become reversed from China-Pakistan to Pakistan-China.

Pakistan's predicament is more simple, but similar to the dilemma faced by India against China before the Indian atomic test of 1974, that is to say, would a nuclear weapons programme increase or decrease Pakistan's security, and could a weapons programme be undertaken at an acceptable economic cost? For Pakistan, responses to the same predicament as India's may be more positive. A few Pakistani nuclear bombs, capable of being launched against India causing unacceptable damage, could render India's nuclear and conventional military superiority over Pakistan meaningless. Pakistan could obtain more security at much less cost. Moreover, unlike India, Pakistan may not have to worry about third-party reactions and

consequences since it has no other adversary in the region with a potential nuclear weapons capability. Certainly, Afghanistan under the Marxists would be unlikely to acquire a nuclear weapons capability if Pakistan went nuclear.

Although Pakistan may carry the advantage, there is, of course, no reason to assume that an Indo-Pakistani nuclear relationship will be less stable than the old Soviet–American or Sino-Soviet nuclear relationships during the Cold War. There are, however, some fundamental differences that may make the situation in South Asia less stable.

First, unlike the relationship that is largely based on ideological and perhaps even ethnic differences between the United States, the Soviet Union and China, the conflict relationship between India and Pakistan rests more on religious antagonisms, making this a more emotional situation during times of crisis. Second, unlike the global relationships where there have been no direct conventional wars among the antagonists (except for the Korean War when China was still a long way from acquiring nuclear weapons), there has been a history of wars on the subcontinent since India and Pakistan received their independence in 1947. Third, unlike the great distances that exist in the deployment of nuclear weapons at the global level, the deployment of nuclear weapons in India and Pakistan would be very close to each other – literally in each other's backyards – causing, perhaps, more nervousness on either side. Finally, unlike the more gradual evolution of nuclear strategic relationships among the great powers, the formal acquisition and declaration of nuclear-weapons capabilities by India and Pakistan will be more sudden and dramatic, calling for quick adjustments in national policies and defence strategies. While none of the above conditions would necessarily cause a breakdown in strategic stability in a nuclearised South Asia in the 1990s, they provide some good reasons to avoid a regional nuclear arms race.

## THE NEW GLOBAL, REGIONAL AND DOMESTIC POLITICS AND INDIAN SECURITY

As noted at the beginning of this chapter, although the underlying security issues in South Asia have not fundamentally changed, the end of the Cold War and what appears to be an emerging unipolar world may be expected to have a significant impact on Indian security policy and on the issues of the region. In the post-Cold War era, the strategic interests of both the United States and the Soviet Union in South Asia have virtually ended.

This raises serious doubts about the sources and degree of diplomatic support from the great powers that may be obtained, and doubts about the sources of new weapons and technology that may be obtained from abroad. Moreover, the additional turmoil arising from the Gulf Crisis will add to Indian fears of a new round of political tensions and arms buildups in the Middle East, with the possibility of arms transfers and military spillover effects in South Asia.

Even in the past, American strategic interests in South Asia were peripheral compared with such interests in Europe, the Middle East and East Asia – at least until the Soviet invasion and occupation of Afghanistan between December 1979 and March 1989. On the other hand, the Soviet Union had perceived India to be an important counterweight to the growing hostility and threat from China since the Sino-Soviet rift broke out into the open in 1963. The importance of India in Soviet strategic planning increased further after President Richard Nixon's visit to China, when an undeclared quasi-alliance relationship directed at the Soviet Union began to develop between the two countries. Conversely, the importance of the Soviet Union in Indian strategic planning had become paramount following the 1962 Sino-Indian conflict and the failure of the United States to provide arms to India following the objection of its ally in SEATO and CENTO, Pakistan. The new Sino-American relationship, that had developed during the Bangladesh crisis of 1971, further increased Indian dependence on the Soviet Union for arms and diplomatic support. Meanwhile, the 1962 Sino-Indian conflict generated a close alliance relationship between Pakistan and China.

None of the above strategic relationships appears valid in the 1990s. Thus, the emerging post-Cold War strategic relationships, and their implications for India, need to be assessed. For analytical purposes, a series of basic – and unavoidably speculative – propositions regarding the strategic environment in South Asia in the 1990s may be addressed at this stage. (See also Appendices I and II at the end of this chapter.)

### **Likely Positive Trends**

1. The Soviet Union's acute need for economic assistance and advanced technology will call for greater collaboration with the United States and Western Europe, as well as with the industrialised countries of East Asia from Japan to Singapore. The political nature and economic state of the Soviet Union today gives it little interest in the rapidly growing Indian middle-class market.<sup>13</sup> However, while the Soviet Union's strategic interests in South Asia will have



ended, it will continue to follow a benign policy of friendship with India.

2. For the Western industrialised economies, including the Pacific rim countries, access to large but economically receptive markets will be important. Within the limitations of India's severe protectionist policies and bureaucratic red tape, India will be perceived as a desirable market for the Western economic group of countries. In particular, the role and participation in India's economy of some of the major Western countries – the United States, Japan, Germany and France – will increase substantially.
3. As a corollary to the above proposition, Indo-American security and technological cooperation will increase further.
4. Sino-Indian relations will revert back to the era of 'Panchshil' (the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence) of the 1950s. The Sino-Indian border dispute will be resolved on the basis of the territorial status quo or on the basis of some form of give-and-take between the two sides.
5. The setbacks suffered by the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) arising from the Indian military intervention in Sri Lanka, and the renewed antagonistic relations between India and Pakistan arising from the Kashmir crisis, will subside. SAARC will continue to promote a new era of regional security and political confidence in South Asia.

### **Likely Negative Trends**

1. Indo-American relations will continue to be plagued by new problems arising from India's failure to subscribe to the nuclear non-proliferation regime, India's protectionist policies, and its failure to support adequately American policies and interests in the Gulf crisis.
2. Given long contiguous borders and differing economic and political outlooks, China and India will remain rival Asian powers that will continue to stimulate a conventional and eventually a nuclear arms race between the two.
3. The deterioration in Indo-Pakistani relations over the Kashmir issue will continue and may slide towards war. Pakistan's continued and

long-standing efforts to become part of the Islamic Middle East will be given a new impetus.

4. Riddled with internal strife and separatist movements, the multi-ethnic states of India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka will disintegrate wholly or partially.
5. SAARC will collapse all but in name.

The positive trends should call for a decrease in the Indian military buildup; the negative trends may call for an increase in the buildup. However, whether we are dealing with the positive or the negative trends, or a combination of both, it is not clear that India's defence policies and programmes will correlate closely with these trends.

Supporters of the continuing Indian military buildup may argue that the era of relative peace in South Asia is the result of India's military dominance – the familiar 'peace through strength' argument so often propounded by various American presidents since the Second World War. It is true that India and Pakistan have clashed repeatedly over the Siachen Glacier in Kashmir since the mid 1980s, and nearly 50,000 Indian troops were deployed in Sri Lanka to fight the Tamil guerrilla insurgency.<sup>14</sup> But, unlike the wars of the past, these two military campaigns in the 1980s did not involve full-scale deployments. They did not create the earlier type of crisis environment in Indian domestic politics, although there was occasional criticism by the political opposition against the government's policies; and, they did not stretch India's relations with the neighbouring states to the diplomatic breaking point, as during the major wars with Pakistan and China in the past. The perception of India as the 'regional bully', especially following its partial economic blockade of Nepal in 1989, did not mean that India was being seriously threatened by any of its smaller neighbours.

Under such circumstances, opponents may argue that India is not so much responding to a changing strategic environment, as much as creating that change through its military buildup, as other states become compelled to respond to the growth of Indian military power. This is the reverse of conditions from the 1950s to the early 1960s, and from the mid-1970s to the mid-1980s. During the first period, India was responding to the American arming of Pakistan under the SEATO and CENTO defence pacts. During the second period, India was beginning to respond to the arms buildup by the oil-rich Muslim states of the Middle East, and to the large-scale movement of naval forces of the United States, the Soviet

Union and France into the Indian Ocean. The second reactive military buildup generated some political debate in India on the diplomatic and military policies needed to deal with the increasing militarisation of the extended Indian strategic environment, that included the Middle East, Southeast Asia and the Indian Ocean.

Herein lies one clue, in explaining current Indian military policy, that may be familiar in other like situations. To a certain extent, what may be perceived as an unjustified arms buildup by one state may be due to time gaps that occur between initial threat perceptions and military responses delayed because of political, economic and technological constraints within a country. Subsequently, similar counter-responses occur among other affected states, producing periodic time-delayed action–reaction arms spirals. The net result will be the occurrence of cyclical military imbalances between two or more states when viewed on a long-term time scale. What is unique in the present arms buildup on the subcontinent, especially under the earlier administration of Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi from 1984 to 1989, is that India appears to be leading the arms buildup rather than essentially reacting to one.

One Indian justification for the continuing arms buildup in the 1990s would be the need to reflect its growing size and importance in Asia and the world. Instead of being continually equated with Pakistan, a nation at one time one-fourth its size and now only one-eighth its size, India needs to be evaluated and assessed against China's military capabilities and world status. In this regard, India suffers from the 'Rodney Dangerfield' syndrome. [For those readers not familiar with this term I have concocted, it refers to the regular and standard punchline of an American comedian, Rodney Dangerfield, who claimed constantly in his stand-up comic routine that all his problems arose from the fact that 'I don't get enough respect'.]

But this explanation, based on the desire for international power and prestige for its own sake, may be hardly sufficient to explain Indian defence policy in the 1990s. Underlying the Indian military buildup is the fear that in the future there could be collusion among the major Islamic states, under the instigation and leadership of Pakistan, to undermine the territorial integrity and stability of India. Moreover, with the end of the Cold War, the possibility of collusion among the former Cold War adversaries to enforce a new world order, that may run contrary to India's strategic interests, needs to be guarded against.

Perhaps the problem of the new insecurities in South Asia arising from external territorial conflict issues and internal armed separatist movements may be resolved by pursuing the West European model of regional economic and political integration. In Western Europe, various states that

over the centuries have fought major wars, including the instigation and perpetuation of two world wars, and the various ethnic groups that periodically have engaged in domestic strife, are being pacified through the incentives of economic cooperation and political integration. A similar approach may end the secessionist movements in South Asia, such as those of Dravidastan, Khalistan, Kashmir, Assam and Nagaland in India, Sindhu Desh, Baluchistan, and Pashtunistan in Pakistan, and Tamil Eelam in Sri Lanka; it may also end the wars of the subcontinent. Unfortunately, South Asia appears to be following the trend of the disintegrative Soviet–East European bloc model of intensifying regional and ethnic conflict, and violent demands for territorial separatism.

## APPENDICES I AND II

The following Appendices I and II are derived from my chapter ‘The Growth of Indian Military Power: From Sufficient Defence to Nuclear Deterrence’, in Ross Babbage and Alexander Gordon (eds), *India's Strategic Future* (London and Sydney: Macmillan for the Australian National University, December 1991).

The two charts demonstrate the possible range in India's defence policy in the 1990s from the past posture of a *minimalist* strategy based on limited conventional defence capabilities to the future posture of a *maximalist* strategy based on conventional and nuclear defence capabilities. Although the progression of strategy and capabilities indicate the move by India to a great power status, a variety of economic, political and military factors also tend to pull India away from the maximalist posture to a minimalist posture.

## APPENDIX I INDIA'S WAR-MAKING CAPABILITIES

### A. *The Traditional Power Posture, 1963–71* (The ‘Minimalist’ Perspective)

#### ‘One-Full-and-One-Half War’ Capability

- Single full war: War against Pakistan on land, air and sea
- Single half war: Land-based border war against China

B. *The Transitional Power Posture, 1972–88*

‘One-Full-and-Three-Half War’ Capability

Single full war:	War against Pakistan on land, air and sea
First half war:	Land-based border war against China
Second half war:	Latent nuclear weapons capability
Third half war:	Proximate island interventionism

C. *The Extended Power Posture, 1989–95*

‘Two-Full-and-Two-Half War’ Capability

First full war:	War against Pakistan on land, air and sea
Second full war:	Latent nuclear weapons and IRBMs
First half war:	Land-based border war against China
Second half war:	Proximate island interventionism

D. *The Asian/Great Power Posture, 1996–2000*  
(The ‘Maximalist’ Perspective)

‘Three-Full-and-Three-Half War’ Capability

First full war:	War against Pakistan on land, air and sea
Second full war:	Nuclear weapons with IRBM/ICBMs
Third full war:	Naval power in the Indian Ocean
First half war:	Land-based border war against China
Second half war:	Proximate island interventionism
Third half war:	Defence of Maritime Zone

APPENDIX II IMPLICIT DOCTRINES IN INDIA’S MILITARY POLICY

A. *Sufficient Conventional Defence, 1963–71*  
(The ‘Minimalist’ Posture)

**Pakistan:** Maintain slight edge in ground forces against West Pakistan, qualitative parity but quantitative superiority in the air, and superiority at

sea but at low resource levels. Maintain superior but minimum land, air and sea forces against East Pakistan.

**China:** Maintain sufficient ground forces along Himalayan borders to adequately fight the last war of 1962

*B. Limited Conventional Deterrence, 1972–88*

**Pakistan:** Move towards conventional military superiority over Pakistan. Develop SRBM capability

**China:** Maintain sufficient ground forces along Himalayan borders. Develop intermediate missile delivery systems (IRBMs).

**Indian Ocean:** Commence naval expansion for defence of coastline and of the maritime economic zone.

*C. Latent Nuclear Deterrence, 1989–95*

**Pakistan:** Maintain conventional military superiority. Deploy short-range nuclear delivery systems (SRBMs and bombers) while maintaining nuclear weapons capabilities on the threshold of production and deployment.

**China:** Maintain sufficient ground forces along Himalayan borders. Deploy intermediate-range delivery systems (IRBMs) while maintaining nuclear weapons capabilities on the threshold of production and deployment.

**Indian Ocean:** Expand naval capabilities in the extended Bay of Bengal and Arabian Sea regions.

*D. Regional Nuclear Deterrence, 1996–2000*  
(The 'Maximalist' Posture)

**Pakistan:** Maintain conventional and nuclear deterrent capabilities based on conventional superiority and short-range nuclear delivery systems (SRBMs and bombers).

**China:** Maintain sufficient border ground forces and adopt minimum nuclear deterrent capability based on intermediate and long-range delivery systems (IRBMs and ICBMs).

**Indian Ocean:** Expand naval capabilities to demonstrate 'sea power' among the littoral states from the Cape of Good Hope to the Straits of Malacca.

## NOTES

1. The average Indian GNP growth rate figures were obtained from *Statistical Outline of India, 1988-89* (Bombay: Tata Services, 1988) p. 5.
2. See *The Military Balance: 1988-89 and 1989-90* (London: International Institute for Strategic Studies, 1988 and 1989).
3. Note that there is not necessarily a close correlation between GNP growth rates and annual increases in the defence allocation in previous years. This may be due to time-lags or delayed official responses, or urgent military demands in response to arms procurement by India's military rivals. In the past there were increases in defence allocations of 4.3 per cent from 1978 to 1979, 18.3 per cent from 1979 to 1980, 16.2 per cent from 1980 to 1981, 2.8 per cent from 1981 to 1982, and 5.5 per cent from 1982 to 1983. There were annual GNP growth rates of 4.8 per cent in 1979-80, 7.5 per cent in 1980-81, 5.2 per cent in 1981-82, and 1.8 per cent in 1982-83. Percentage defence increases over the previous year were calculated from annual Indian defence budget figures provided by issues of *The Military Balance* from 1980-81 to 1984-85. GNP growth rates were derived from *India 1981: A Reference Annual* (New Delhi: Ministry of Information and Broadcasting) p. 34; and from *The Times of India Directory and Yearbook, 1984* (Bombay: Times of India Press, no date) p. 288.
4. The figures that follow are from *The Military Balance: 1989-90* (London: International Institute for Strategic Studies, 1989).
5. See Jasjit Singh, 'Pakistan Mounts Big Military Exercise', *Times of India*, 6 December 1989.
6. See *News India* (New York), 22 December 1989.
7. See reports in the *Times of India*, 1 and 2 February 1990.
8. *Times of India*, 9 February 1988.
9. For a recent study of the growth and development of this service, see Robert H. Bruce (ed.), *The Modern Indian Navy and the Indian Ocean* (Perth, Australia: Centre for Indian Ocean Regional Studies, Curtin University of Technology, 1989).
10. See Raju G. C. Thomas, 'The Sources of Indian Naval Expansion', and Ashley J. Tellis, 'Securing the Barrack: The Logic, Structure and Objectives of India's Naval Expansion', in Robert H. Bruce (ed.), *The Modern Indian Navy and the Indian Ocean*, pp. 95-108, and pp. 5-50.
11. For a report on the 'Agni' IRBM launch, see report in the *New York Times*, 23 May 1989; and for the second 'Prithvi' SRBM launch, see *The Hindu* (Madras), 28 September 1989.
12. For a rationalisation proposing a major Indian missile programme, see K. Subrahmanyam, 'Missile Control Regime: Case for a Stepped-Up Indian Effort', *Times of India*, 31 January 1989.

13. This basic proposition was suggested to me by Alexander Bendick of the Institute of Oriental Studies of the USSR Academy of Sciences during a discussion at the University of Chicago in the Spring Semester of 1990.
14. For an analysis of the Tamil crisis in Sri Lanka, see Dilip Mukerjee, 'Grim Lanka Scenario', *Times of India*, 16 January 1990.



# 7 Pakistan's Foreign Policy: Alternating Approaches

Kail C. Ellis

## INTRODUCTION

Foreign policies are designed to achieve specific objectives and Pakistan's has been no exception. Pakistan emerged from the old political framework of India, its nationalism based upon the religious heritage of Islam. Its national interests were self-preservation, the maintenance of its territorial integrity and political independence.

As Pakistan searched for its identity, it was confronted with two possible approaches: it could base the country's policies on Islam, which had been the basis of its nationalism, or it could follow a 'realist' approach, recognising that its location next to a powerful neighbour, India, necessitated an adroit but pragmatic foreign policy.

Pakistan has tried both approaches in its foreign policy. Although the particular emphases of each approach varied as circumstances warranted, Pakistan's foreign policy has used both Islamic ideology and pragmatic realism with some consistency.

In the first year of its independence, Pakistan was influenced by its own struggle with colonialism and applied a moral approach to international problems based upon pan-Islamism. This emphasis lasted until 1952, when concern about its military weakness and its need for foreign aid led Pakistan to align itself with the West through the regional alliances of SEATO in 1954 and the Baghdad Pact in 1955.

Pakistan's war with India in 1971, and the subsequent loss of Bangladesh, engendered a resurgence of Islamic feeling which found expression in a return to an Islamic foreign policy emphasis. This emphasis was occasioned by the economic opportunities which the Gulf states could provide as much as by pan-Islamic considerations. Similarly, Pakistan's decision to pursue a nuclear programme at the same time was undertaken as much as a reaction to India's detonation of a nuclear device as it was to giving this capability to the Muslim world.

When Pakistan's pursuit of the nuclear option provoked the United States into suspending all military and economic aid, Pakistan emphasised further its ties to the Muslim states. Saudi Arabia and Iran in particular

were courted because their pro-Western policies had endeared them to Washington and they might, as a result, persuade the United States not to suspend aid to Pakistan. This tactic achieved limited success, and it was not until the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in December 1979, when Pakistan was able to reassert its strategic value to the West, the substantive aid was restored.

The Iran–Iraq war of 1980–88 and the Persian Gulf war of 1990–91 presented a dilemma for Pakistan. Both conflicts divided the Muslim world and both official and public attitudes in Pakistan were severely divided. In the first instance, Pakistan's Shi'ite minority was apprehensive lest the government's alliance with the West propel Pakistan into a conflict with their Iranian co-religionists. With regard to the second Gulf war, although Pakistan participated in the multinational force which was sent to protect Saudi Arabia from Iraqi aggression, popular opinion in Pakistan was very pro-Iraqi once Saddam Hussein was viewed as standing up to the United States.

This chapter will trace in broad outline Pakistan's alternating pan-Islamic and pragmatic approaches to its foreign policy. It will not deal with various events and decisions in any specific detail or in any particular chronological order; rather, it will examine how Pakistan's foreign policy decision have been influenced by these alternating approaches.

## A MUSLIM FOREIGN POLICY

From its inception in August 1947, Pakistan's rulers have used Islam as a source of national identity and as a means to legitimise their rule. Mohammad Ali Jinnah's 'Two Nation Theory', namely that Hindus and Muslims 'belong to two different civilisations which are based mainly on conflicting ideas and conceptions',<sup>1</sup> instilled in Pakistanis a Muslim consciousness which not only justified Pakistan's separate existence from India, but also launched its course in foreign policy.

As the founder of a new fledgling state, Jinnah spontaneously looked for outside support. Since Islam was the basis of Pakistan's nationalism, it was natural that he look first to the Muslim states. Indeed, wishing to project Pakistan as a leading Muslim state, Jinnah stressed the need for cohesion and cooperation among all the Muslim states and appealed to their common struggles. In an *Eid* message to Muslim states in August 1948, for example, he stated that 'the drama of power politics now being staged in Palestine, Indonesia and Kashmir should serve as an eye-opener to us... it is only by putting up a united front that we can make our voice

felt in the councils of the world.<sup>2</sup> The theme of Muslim cooperation was also taken up by Liaquat Ali Khan, Pakistan's first prime minister. The Prime Minister declared that Pakistan's major foreign policy objectives are first, 'the integrity of Pakistan' and secondly, 'the cultivation of close relations with other Muslim countries'.<sup>3</sup>

Although Islam distinguished Pakistan ideologically from its secular neighbour India, it was the governments' fear for the 'integrity of Pakistan' from the numerically superior Hindu state that drove Pakistan's foreign policy. Pakistan's early leaders tried to attract moral support for the struggle with India from Muslim countries by stressing Islamic solidarity. Pakistan's first Constitution (1949) embodied this approach by directing that 'the state shall endeavor to strengthen the bonds of unity among Muslim countries', and by declaring that Islam was to be the inspiration for economic reforms at home and a solution for the current maladies of humankind.<sup>4</sup> Solidarity with the Muslim world was expressed politically by Pakistan's siding with the Arabs on the Palestinian issue in the United Nations General Assembly, and its votes against the partition of Palestine and the creation of Israel. Pakistan also championed the struggle against French colonialism in North Africa and supported the Indonesians against Dutch rule. It pursued these issues even as it was preoccupied with the Kashmir issue at the United Nations.<sup>5</sup> In addition, the government sought to project Pakistan as a leading Muslim country by sponsoring international conferences on Muslim cooperation, which dealt with various economic and political issues affecting the Muslim world, as for example, the International Economic Conference which was held in Karachi in 1949. It also entered into treaties of friendship with almost every Muslim country in the period of 1950-1.

By 1952, however, events in the Muslim world caused Pakistan to re-think its pan-Islamic approach. Overtures to the Muslim countries did not result in any tangible support for Pakistan's struggle with India, as these nations were too weak and too recently emancipated from colonialism to have any impact with the Great Powers. Pakistan, too, was still militarily weak and the Kashmir problem which required Great Power intervention if a solution was to be found, remained intractable. In March 1952, Pakistan's foreign minister had invited twelve prime ministers of Muslim countries to Karachi to consider setting up a system for consultations on questions of common interest. The meeting never took place; however, talk about Pakistan's heading a 'Muslim bloc', and comments by the Rector of Al-Azhar University in Cairo that 'too many conferences were taking place in Pakistan', bridled Pakistani leaders.<sup>6</sup> It seemed that the Arab states were too consumed with their struggle with the Palestinian

issue to think about Kashmir; while secular Turkey was more concerned about the Communist menace on its northern borders, and Iran was too involved with its own nationalist movement to assist Pakistan.

## ENTER THE UNITED STATES

As Pakistan was reevaluating its support from the Muslim states, it began to be noticed by American policymakers. The United States had viewed with alarm the Soviet Union's expansionist moves in Iran, Greece and Turkey in the late 1940s. The fall of China to the Communists in 1949, the detonation of the Soviet Union's first atomic bomb in that same year, and the invasion of South Korea in 1950, indicated that a shift in the global balance of power was taking place. Alarmed by this string of successes, Secretary of State John Foster Dulles visited the Middle East in 1953 in order to assess the Communist danger. By becoming the first American Secretary of State to visit the Middle East, Dulles hoped that his visit would demonstrate to the Arab states the importance with which the United States regarded the region. He also wished to convince them that they should enter into a military defence pact with the West to protect them from Communist expansionism. The Arab states' encounter with European colonialism, however, was too recent for them to be persuaded by Dulles's arguments. Led by Egypt, which had just undergone a nationalist revolution under Nasser, they were adamant in their refusal to join any Western-sponsored defence pact. As a consequence, Dulles decided to turn his attention to an alliance of the 'Northern Tier' states of Turkey, Iran and Pakistan. Since these states were in closer geographical proximity to the Soviet Union, it would follow that they had a greater awareness of the Soviet threat. Pakistan, in particular, was receptive to Dulles's overtures. American food relief in 1953 had averted a famine with the result that the United States was very popular in the country. But more importantly, Pakistan was eager to enter into an alliance with the West. Its eagerness, however, was based not on a fear of the Soviet threat but on a fear of India. Pakistan, militarily weak and economically underdeveloped, realised that the West, and particularly the United States, was the only available source of assistance. Pakistan's encounters with India over Kashmir in the early 1950s had made its military weakness painfully obvious. Pakistan needed not only military aid. It needed to have the Kashmir dispute resolved if its relations with India were to be stable, and only the Great Powers could mediate a settlement favourable to Pakistan.

The apparent convergence of American and Pakistani interests bore fruit in February 1954, when the United States announced that it would provide military assistance to Pakistan. This agreement was followed by the signing of the United States–Pakistan Mutual Defense Agreement in May and by Pakistan's joining SEATO on 8 September 1954. Pakistan also sought to shore up its alliances within the region, and a military assistance pact with Turkey was signed in April 1954. This agreement provided the framework for the formation of the Baghdad Pact (later CENTO) in 1955. Pakistan's adherence to the Western-sponsored Baghdad Pact, however, was to affect severely its relations with the Arab states. During the 1956 Suez crisis, for example, its support of Great Britain moved Nasser to call Pakistan 'a stooge of Western imperialism'. Even conservative Saudi Arabia attacked Pakistan for 'having joined hands with those who had bad intentions toward the Arabs'.<sup>7</sup>

Pakistan's participation in the Western military alliance was conditioned on a guarantee of its security against India. The American agenda in the 1950s and early 1960s, however, was containment of the Soviet Union. The United States gave military assistance to Pakistan (and the other Northern Tier countries) in order to build up their indigenous fighting capabilities for use in contingencies in Southwest Asia and the Middle East. The United States did not wish to alienate India, whose secular democracy found much favour in Washington. Certainly, it was unwilling to jeopardise relations with India by guaranteeing Pakistan's security. In Washington's view, the military alliances were formed to counter the threats emanating from the Soviet Union and, by extension Communist China, not India. This view went counter to Pakistan's basic security assumptions.

The Sino-Indian War in 1962 seemed to confirm American fears of the Chinese threat. Much to Pakistan's alarm, the United States offered arms to India while at the same time India began to draw closer to the Soviet Union. Pakistan dismissed as naive assurances by the United States that the arms supplied to India would not be used against it. When Zulfikar Ali Bhutto became foreign minister in 1963, he made this aid an issue when he told the National Assembly that Pakistan would be forced to consider 'a fundamental decision to withdraw from Western alliances if long-term aid to India was not coupled with a settlement of the Kashmir dispute'. Massive military aid to India, he declared, would disturb the balance of power on the subcontinent and would, therefore, be considered an 'unfriendly act' by Pakistan.<sup>8</sup>

Since the United States failed to play a constructive role in settling the Kashmir dispute and continued to sell arms to India, Pakistan saw no

alternative but to look to China, India's rival, for security. Much to the dismay of the United States, President Ayub Khan normalised relations with China in 1963. Despite these attempts to assert its independence of the Americans, Pakistan remained almost totally dependent on the United States for arms. This became more evident when Pakistan's second war with India, in 1965, brought on an American embargo of arms for both Pakistan and India.

The fundamental dichotomy between the American and Pakistani perceptions of the basis of their alliance continues to plague relations between the two countries. From Pakistan's perspective, India is an interloper affecting its relations with the United States. Until the Kashmir problem is resolved, relations between the United States and Pakistan will continue to be subjected to vagaries of this regional conflict.

## THE LOSS OF BANGLADESH

Pakistan's third war with India, in 1971, and the subsequent loss of East Pakistan (Bangladesh), presented it with a series of stark realities. First, the war had an unsettling effect on Pakistanis which was similar to that which the Arabs experienced in their defeat by Israel in 1967. The initial shock of defeat was followed by a period of introspection and soul-searching in which Pakistanis questioned whether the defeat was a condemnation of the Muslim *Ummah*, and if Bangladesh was lost because Pakistanis had disregarded Islam in their individual and collective lives.

Second, the war propelled Bhutto to pursue the nuclear option. Although, from Pakistan's point of view, this decision was made necessary by India's prior detonation of a nuclear device in 1974, it was to encounter strong opposition from the United States. The result was that American military assistance to Pakistan was constantly threatened.

Third, Pakistan came to realise that China's role as a 'balancer' in the region had been effectively checked by the Friendship Treaty which the Soviet Union and India signed in August 1971. With the Soviet Union aligned with India and the China card neutralised, Pakistan's only alternative was to try to reestablish its alliance with the United States.

## Islamic Revivalism

Bhutto capitalised on the public sentiment for a reaffirmation of Islam as a personal and national ideology. Extensive Islamic provisions were incorporated in the 1973 Constitution, which echoed earlier endeavours to

emphasise Pakistan's commitment to Islam. Article 40 of the new Constitution, for example, gave a detailed account of Pakistan's renewed thrust in foreign policy, namely, 'to strengthen fraternal relations between Muslim countries, support to the common interests of the peoples of Asia, Africa and Latin America', and to promote international peace. Other measures enacted by the National Assembly which proved popular with the religious parties included the 1974 decision declaring that the Ahmadis, a Muslim sect founded by Mirza Ghulam Ahmad at the turn of this century, were non-Muslims.<sup>9</sup>

Bhutto tried to portray the loss of Bangladesh as a Hindu-Muslim struggle. He also stressed the need for Muslim solidarity in the economic and political spheres. Of particular importance to Pakistan, however, was the economic sphere. The steep rise in the price of oil in 1973 altered enormously the economic capabilities of the Muslim states of the Gulf. Bhutto presented Pakistan as a willing and useful partner to the militarily weak but wealthy Gulf countries in return for their assistance in bolstering Pakistan's own economic and diplomatic position. The relationship was portrayed as mutually beneficial. Pakistan's military know-how would assist the Gulf states in return for investment and trade opportunities. For Pakistan, the Gulf's geographical proximity made the region attractive for its exports of food and manufactured products. In order to take advantage of the region's market potential, special trade missions and exhibitions which promoted Pakistani products were sent to the Gulf.

Pakistan's attention to the Gulf countries paid off in a relatively short period of time. Prior to 1974, Pakistan received no direct financial assistance from the Islamic countries. By 1976, however, the Arab world had given loans and credits worth \$993 million, or almost one-third of all the financial aid from foreign sources to Pakistan over the previous three years. Saudi Arabia became the largest single market for Pakistan's industrial and agricultural products. That country also provided financing for crucial economic projects and military purchases. In 1977-8, remittances from Pakistanis working abroad amounted to more than \$1.1 billion, and by 1983, trade with the Gulf countries amounted to 22 per cent of Pakistan's exports, with Saudi Arabia alone accounting for 9 per cent of that total.<sup>10</sup> Its expatriate workers remitted some \$3 billion to the national treasury in 1983, while the economic assistance rendered to Pakistan by the Gulf states amounted to \$2.2 billion between 1973 and 1983.<sup>11</sup>

On the diplomatic level, Bhutto identified Pakistan as a Middle Eastern power and the 'anchor' of the Muslim states in the Indian Ocean. With the new oil wealth of these states in mind, Bhutto stated that the 'Muslim

countries are now so placed as to be able to play a most constructive and rewarding role for cooperation among themselves and with other countries of the Third World.<sup>12</sup> Once again, Pakistan attempted to project itself as a leading Muslim country by hosting a Second Islamic Summit in Lahore in February 1974. The conference was co-sponsored by Saudi Arabia and attended by 37 countries. Coming as it did shortly after the October 1973 war between Israel and the Arab states, the conference's immediate goal was to secure the liberation of Jerusalem and the Arab lands occupied by Israel. Its long-range agenda, however, was to define the global role of the Muslim states. Of note is the conference's recognition of the Palestine Liberation Organisation as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinians, six months before the Rabat Arab Summit adopted that position.<sup>13</sup>

### **The Nuclear Option**

The loss of Bangladesh increased Pakistani fears that India would, at an appropriate time, again move to dismember Pakistan. India's detonation of a nuclear device in May 1974 increased these fears. Although the Indian explosion was presented as peaceful in intent, it was ostensibly directed to enhance its security against China, with which it had fought a war in 1962. Prime Minister Bhutto feared that it made Pakistan susceptible to nuclear blackmail. Bhutto declared that the Indian explosion 'had introduced a qualitative change in the situation prevalent in the subcontinent', and he directed his foreign office to lobby at the United Nations for a 'nuclear free (weapons) zone' in South Asia.<sup>14</sup> India opposed the proposal, stating that such regional arrangements did not take into consideration the security needs of the concerned states. Rebuffed by India, Bhutto felt that he had no choice but to concentrate on developing a nuclear option for Pakistan. Although Pakistan has denied that it is developing nuclear weapons, Bhutto confirmed that he had inaugurated a nuclear weapons programme in a testament he wrote shortly before his execution in 1979.

I put my entire vitality behind the task of acquiring nuclear capability for my country...we were on the threshold of full nuclear capability when I left the government to come to this death cell. We know that Israel and South Africa have full nuclear capability. The Communist powers also possess it. Only the Islamic civilization was without it, but that position was about to change.<sup>15</sup>

Pakistan signed a nuclear reprocessing plant agreement with France in March 1976, much to the United States' dismay. By this time



international terrorism had become a world concern, and the spectre of a world held hostage by a number of Third World countries armed with nuclear weapons began to haunt US policymakers, especially Congressional leaders. Talk of an 'Islamic bomb' conjured up images of a newly resurgent Arab and Islamic world which had recently imposed an oil embargo on the West. The world, it seemed, had got out of control and nuclear proliferation had become the major threat to international security.

Bhutto's fall from power, in mid-1977, did not change the United States's opposition to Pakistan's nuclear programme. Pakistan remained convinced that its programme was a strategic necessity. Indeed, Pakistan had become convinced that it had been abandoned by the United States because of pro-Indian sentiment in the State Department. This conviction appeared to be confirmed by Deputy Secretary of State Warren Christopher, who declared in New Delhi that Washington expected India to play a 'leading role' in South Asia. It seemed that the United States wished to recognise Indian preeminence on the subcontinent as a way of letting outstanding issues take their course, with the result that the need for future US involvement in the region would be precluded. Pakistan, consequently, became more convinced than ever that it alone had to provide for its security.<sup>16</sup>

At this point, India weighed in with its own campaign charging that Pakistan was engaged in the clandestine manufacture of nuclear weapons. This campaign found a ready response in Congress. Agha Shahi, Pakistan's foreign minister, noted Pakistan's alarm at the testimony of members of the Reagan administration before Congress that the Indian military had presented Prime Minister Indira Gandhi with a plan for a military strike against the Kahuta facility.<sup>17</sup>

Although Pakistan consistently denied that it sought to develop nuclear weapons, it claimed that it could not unilaterally renounce their use, given India's possession of nuclear weapons. A unilateral renouncement, according to Agha Shahi, would imply that 'India would be free to multiply its "bombs in the basement" to a limitless extent, and add medium-range and intercontinental ballistic missiles to its delivery capability.'<sup>18</sup> Furthermore, given India's hegemony on the subcontinent, there would be no constraints on the use of its power. A nuclear-armed India, therefore, enjoying a monopoly of nuclear weapons and wielding the club of the 'Indira Doctrine', would be able to force the virtually defenceless peripheral states of South Asia into a subcontinental system under its aegis.<sup>19</sup> (Shahi was referring to the statement of Prime Minister Indira Gandhi by which she claimed for India the right to concern itself

with the citizens of Indian origin in other regional states by reason of their cultural affinity with the people of India.)

In the absence of a clear commitment by India that it had closed the nuclear option, Pakistanis claimed that they had no other choice but to give the impression, as President Zia ul-Haq did, albeit ambiguously, that Pakistan's nuclear capability was 'good enough to create an impression of deterrence'.<sup>20</sup>

The nuclear problem continues to complicate Pakistan's relations with the United States and India. On a more optimistic note, Pakistan and India did agree, on 20 December 1990, to implement a treaty, signed more than two years earlier, which prohibited an attack on each other's nuclear facilities. But Pakistan's resubmissions of a proposal for a five-nation regional meeting to negotiate the creation of a nuclear free zone in South Asia have been rejected. Once again, however, India objected to the proposal, on the grounds that 'it is illusory to seek security through regional arrangements, particularly where the security interests of all the concerned states are not taken into account in defining the region.'<sup>21</sup> Pakistani officials read this statement as a reference to China but discounted its validity because, they asserted, the Chinese were no longer a strategic threat to India as they had decided to concentrate on economic development.

Pakistanis lament the United States's lack of appreciation for their strategic situation with India. The United States, they charge, practises a double standard. In principle the United States claims that it is against nuclear proliferation, but in fact it is selective in its enforcement of that principle, as it ignores Israel's, India's and South Africa's nuclear weapons programmes. Instead, the United States allows its overriding concern for Israel to dominate its relations with Pakistan in the belief that ultimately, Pakistan's nuclear capability might work to the detriment of Israel's security.

## THE US SECURITY UMBRELLA

The 1971 war with India cost Pakistan \$200 million in lost military equipment. With his military demoralised and India proving its ascendancy once again, Bhutto needed American military aid.<sup>22</sup> Bhutto reportedly offered the United States a base at Gwadar on the Baluchistan coast. American officials were surprised by the offer, but sensing that it was a ploy to obtain US technology and a commitment of approximately \$2.5 billion to develop the facility, did not take it.<sup>23</sup> The US naval base at

Diego Garcia in the Indian Ocean, which was a thousand miles from the Persian Gulf, seemed to meet American needs sufficiently. The base was far enough away not to embroil the United States in the domestic affairs of the region but close enough to be on hand if a crisis should develop.

Despite the Americans' scepticism, Bhutto's offer could have been sincere. Had it been acted upon, for example, it would have reopened the door to military assistance to Pakistan. Besides, it almost certainly would have aggravated India, which was opposed to the US presence in Diego Garcia. An augmented US presence would also have brought Pakistan closer to the United States. China would also have been amenable to an enhanced US presence as a counterweight to the Soviet Union's support of India. Bhutto therefore felt secure in making the offer, especially if it brought in needed arms to bolster Pakistan's military defences and, at the same time, satisfy the military and keep them out of politics.

As Bhutto's purported offer was not accepted, he turned to the Shah of Iran and to China and Saudi Arabia, asking them to intercede with the United States. This tactic was temporarily successful and the embargo on arms to Pakistan was lifted in 1975. The March 1976 nuclear processing agreement which Pakistan signed with France reawakened American fears of nuclear proliferation and brought Pakistan back to square one in its relations with the United States. In 1977, the United States Congress passed the Symington–Glenn amendment to the Security Assistance Act. This amendment forbade US military and economic assistance to any country receiving 'nuclear-enriched equipment' which was not subject to Atomic Energy Agency safeguards. Pakistan fell into this forbidden category with the result that all US assistance was terminated in April 1979. The termination of aid in 1979 was just the beginning of a series of turbulent events which were to affect the region in the next decade.

The fall of the Shah of Iran in January 1979, and the coming to power of Ayatollah Khomeini, whose calls for Islamic revolution alarmed the conservative Sunni monarchs of the Gulf, inaugurated the crisis. It was the seizure of American hostages by Iranian revolutionaries in November 1979, however, which brought the United States to centre stage in the crisis. The spiralling events were capped by the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in December 1979. The Soviet action raised the spectre of renewed Soviet expansionist strategy in the Middle East and signalled a change in the strategic balance in the region.

President Carter declared the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan a 'grave threat to the free movement of Middle East oil'. In his State of the Union Address on 24, January 1980, the President served notice that 'an attempt by any outside force to gain control of the Persian Gulf region will be

regarded as an assault on the vital interests of the United States of America', and 'will be repelled by any means necessary, including military force'.<sup>24</sup>

The region's instability was further highlighted by the outbreak of war between Iraq and Iran in September 1980. This new threat to the security of the Gulf states and the oil supply necessitated a greater involvement by the United States to preserve the balance of power in the region. In response to a request from Saudi Arabia, the Carter administration dispatched AWACS to bolster the Saudi air defence system. This action broadened the protection of the Carter Doctrine to include threats coming from within the region (Iran) and extended its provisions to the other Gulf states as well.<sup>25</sup> Pakistan, which had suffered the loss of US aid in April, found itself a 'frontline' state with the Soviet Union. As a result, it once again found favour with the Carter Administration. US aid to Pakistan went from zero, at the time of Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, to \$3.2 billion over the next six years. As a result, Pakistan became equal with Turkey as the third largest recipient of United States aid after Israel and Egypt.

In March 1980, President Carter established the Rapid Deployment Force (RDF) to enhance the United States's strategic position in the region. The RDF later became the US Central Command (CENTCOM), with responsibility for 19 countries spanning Southwest Asia, the Persian Gulf, and the Horn of Africa. Pakistan, with its strategic location near the Gulf of Oman, was designated a critical allied role. Much of US aid to Pakistan at this time came from CENTCOM-linked aid. US planners reportedly allocated some \$14 billion to be spent by the end of the decade on facilities which were to be linked to the rapid deployment of US forces to the region. CENTCOM's goal was to have the capacity to land upwards of 600,000 troops in the area under wartime conditions.<sup>26</sup>

With the Gulf war and the Afghanistan war being fought simultaneously, the United States reportedly undertook secret negotiations with Pakistan to arrange naval and air facilities on the Makran coastline in Baluchistan, and near Karachi, for CENTCOM. In November, 1986, General George Crist, the Commander-in-Chief of CENTCOM, visited Pakistan with a 70-person military delegation amid conjectures that President Zia had agreed to give the United States the requested facilities.<sup>27</sup> A return visit by General Crist in late June 1987 increased rumours that Pakistan was giving the United States base rights on its territory. This speculation was fuelled by reports that the US Agency for International Development (USAID) had funded the construction of

major highways and airfields, as well as other infrastructural development works on the coast. In addition, the United States sold Pakistan P-3 marine surveillance aircraft, which could be used to monitor the Gulf sea lanes, and agreed to study its request for AWACS radar planes with a view that they could be used to monitor both the military situation in the Gulf and Soviet manoeuvres in Central Asia. Reports also indicated that Islamabad had been asked to consider a request from CENTCOM to move a forward headquarters base from Florida to Pakistan, a move which would have provoked Iran, and, by extension, Pakistani Shi'ites.

## THE GULF COUNTRIES

Bhutto's policy toward the Muslim states was continued by General Zia ul-Haq, who had come to power in the 1977 military coup. Zia emphasised Pakistan's geographical proximity to the Gulf with the idea that the US's strong concern for Gulf security would be extended to include Pakistan. He stated that Pakistan 'constitutes the back door to the Gulf', and, to make this case, he pointed out that the Gulf of Oman is an extension of the Gulf itself, coming right up to the coast of Pakistan before widening out as the Arabian Sea. Any hostile presence on the 450-mile coast of Pakistan, he declared, would also place the Gulf states at a grave disadvantage.<sup>28</sup> It seemed that to deal with the frying pan of subcontinental conflicts with India and Afghanistan, Pakistan was now ready to jump into the fire of Middle East conflicts.

By the mid-1980s, Pakistan had military missions in 22 countries in the Middle East and Africa, making it the largest exporter of military personnel in the third World. The missions played a crucial intelligence, training and internal security role in those countries.<sup>29</sup> Pakistan forged close military relations with the Arab Gulf by building upon past involvement in the region. Oman, for example, had traditionally recruited troops from Baluchistan and Pakistani army officers for the middle and junior ranks. Saudi Arabia and Kuwait also employed Pakistani personnel in their newly established navies and air forces, and Pakistani pilots flew F-10s and Mirage jets for many Gulf states.<sup>30</sup>

Pakistan had approximately 13,000 military personnel in Saudi Arabia and another 20,000 to 30,000 troops served in other countries in the region. This presence had a significant impact on Pakistan's domestic situation. Since these troops were rotated biennially, an estimated 40 per cent of Pakistan's armed forces had served in military missions abroad. As

the troops were paid significantly higher salaries abroad than they would have received in Pakistan, upon their return home their presence gave rise to a new, wealthy, privileged military elite that had an interest in maintaining the status quo.<sup>31</sup>

Pakistan's role as a conduit for arms to the Afghan resistance tended to complicate its relations with Iran, however. It was well known that Saudi Arabia paid for much of the arms that were funnelled to the Afghan mujahiddin through Pakistan, and that this further solidified ties between the two countries, Iran, however, was suspicious of the Saudis' objectives, since they would support only those factions of the Afghan resistance which were Sunni. Iran also resented Saudi financial and political support for Iraq in its war with Iran, and objected to any moves that would extend Saudi influence. In particular, it did not want Pakistan to act as the military arm of what it perceived to be the Saudis' anti-Shi'ite policy.

As a result of these considerations, Pakistan tried to balance its dependence on Saudi and US military and economic aid on the one hand, with its desire to maintain good relations with all the Gulf states, including its large Shi'ite neighbour, Iran, on the other. Iran was an important trading partner for Pakistan, and Pakistan provided much-needed foodstuffs and consumer goods by sea and by rail from Quetta to the Iranian border. Besides, Pakistan's own Shi'ite minority, estimated at approximately 15–20 per cent of the population, was considered pro-Khomeini, and the government did not want to aggravate already tense Shi'ite and Sunni communal relations within Pakistan.<sup>32</sup>

Pakistan managed to enjoy close relations with all the Gulf countries during the Gulf war. The downturn in the world economy that took place because of the oil glut in the mid-1980s, however, placed Pakistan in a difficult position. Many of its expatriate workers in the Middle East returned to Pakistan because of lack of employment. Added to this was the economic blow delivered in 1988 by Saudi Arabia, which asked Pakistan to recall the 13,000 troops that had been stationed in that country since 1983. Saudi Arabia had reportedly asked that Pakistan not send Shi'ite officers to serve in Saudi Arabia, a request that Pakistan refused to honour. The contingent reportedly acted as a reserve internal security force for the royal family following the 1979 takeover of the Grand Mosque in Mecca.<sup>33</sup> The reason given for their withdrawal was that they were there to defend Saudi Arabia from outside attack, but that given the Gulf war with Iran, allowing them to remain in the country could have become a problem if Pakistani troops, some of whom were Shi'ite, had had to confront Iranian troops.<sup>34</sup>

## THE SOVIET WITHDRAWAL FROM AFGHANISTAN

United States aid to Pakistan was unimpeded as long as the Afghanistan war continued. With the Soviet Union's withdrawal in 1988 and the heralding of the end of the Cold War, concerns about Pakistan's nuclear programme resurfaced. As a consequence of the easing of the Soviet threat, pressures increased in Congress to cut defence programmes. There were also those in Congress who saw the relaxation of tensions with the Soviet Union as an opportunity to deal with Pakistan's nuclear programme. The United State's promise of a \$4 billion military and economic aid programme to Pakistan for 1988–93, half of which was earmarked for military purchases, was particularly vulnerable. Although aid was cut off in the winter of 1987–8, when the Reagan administration found it could not certify to Congress that Pakistan was not making a nuclear bomb, it was restored because of the sensitive stage that the Afghanistan negotiations had reached. The Reagan administration finally certified that Pakistan did not possess a nuclear explosive device, on 16 January 1988. This certification waived the application of the Symington–Glenn amendment until 1991, and cleared the way for a \$480 million aid package for 1988.<sup>35</sup>

## THE PERSIAN GULF CRISIS

Even before Iraq's invasion of Kuwait on 2, August 1990, Pakistan's relations with the Gulf had taken an economic and political downward spiral. By the mid-1980s, the Gulf states had completed construction of most of their infrastructure and no longer needed large numbers of foreign workers. This factor, plus the oil glut which resulted from the over-production of oil to finance the Gulf war, placed Pakistan in a difficult economic situation. With the return of many Pakistani workers, Pakistan's economy not only suffered the loss of their remittances, but the country also had to deal with the number of unemployed, who also increased the burden on the country's social services.

President Zia's death in 1988 and the election of Benazir Bhutto as prime minister seemed to herald a new democratic age for Pakistan. Realising the importance of the Gulf states, especially that of Saudi Arabia, for Pakistan, one of Benazir Bhutto's first acts was to express her desire to visit Saudi Arabia. Benazir was the Muslim world's first woman prime minister and Saudi Arabia carried great symbolic value as the centre of Islam's holy places. Benazir also wanted to mend relations with Saudi

Arabia after the withdrawal of Pakistan's troops from that country. Initially, however, King Fahd declined to receive Benazir, amid speculation that receiving a Muslim woman head of state might offend the country's conservative religious leaders. Saudi Arabia's chief religious leader, Sheikh Abd al-Aziz bin Abdullah bin Baz, issued a *fatwa* which declared that a woman could not head a Muslim nation. The *fatwa* was delivered, not coincidentally, a few days before the Islamic opposition in Pakistan called for a vote of no confidence in the Bhutto government, which was narrowly defeated. King Fahd relented and finally decided to receive Benazir, reportedly as a result of the good offices of Yasir Arafat, who had been friendly with Benazir's father. The King was apparently counselled that not to do so would be an unnecessary snub to the leader of a friendly nation.<sup>36</sup>

Unfortunately for those who had placed great hopes in the return to democratic rule in Pakistan, Benazir's tenure as prime minister was short-lived. Her government proved to be disappointing for those who had been encouraged by her long struggle with President Zia. It fell on 6 August 1990, a few days after the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, amid allegations of misrule and corruption and that the government lacked any legislative agenda.

The onset of the Persian Gulf crisis, however, seemed to present Pakistan with another opportunity to reestablish favourable relations with Saudi Arabia. On 13 August 1990, Pakistan became the first non-Arab Muslim country to join the US led multinational force in Saudi Arabia. The decision was made at the request of Saudi Arabia, but President Ghulam Ishaq Khan said Pakistan did so as an expression of Islamic solidarity in the face of aggression and the violation of a country's territorial integrity. The decision was favourably received by the United States and Saudi Arabia.

Almost from the beginning, however, the Persian Gulf crisis had a severe impact on Pakistan and the other developing countries. The 70 per cent of Pakistan's oil imports (100,000 barrels per day) which came from Kuwait stopped. The subsequent rise in the price per barrel, from \$16 to \$36, meant that Pakistan had to raise an extra \$550 million in foreign exchange. In addition, the displacement of 100,000 Pakistani workers in Kuwait and Iraq meant that Pakistan lost \$2.2 billion in remittances from all its workers in the Middle East.<sup>37</sup> Pakistan's finance minister, Sartaj Aziz, stated that the Gulf crisis threatened to leave Pakistan with a \$3 billion deficit for the fiscal year 1990.

By sending troops to Saudi Arabia Pakistan had hoped to receive from the Saudis financial aid and a commitment for an uninterrupted supply of



oil and military hardware. Also, by showing its readiness to join the multinational force, Pakistan hoped that it could return to the role it had played in the Afghan war, receive certification which would permit military and economic aid to continue, and signal to the United States that it was available to assume a role in any American regional strategy after the war was over. This strategy did not materialise. Instead, Pakistan received less aid, as the Saudis did not wish to set a precedent for the other members of the multinational force. Also, the required certification was not received, with the result that all American aid had been terminated for the fiscal year 1991.<sup>38</sup>

Not only did Pakistan not reap the benefits of cooperation with the United States and Saudi Arabia, but its government also had to contend with its domestic public opinion, which opposed the sending of troops to fight another Muslim country. Strong pro-Iraqi passions were expressed by Pakistanis, and indeed this was the popular sentiment in most Muslim countries. Scores of daily demonstrations throughout Pakistan expressed solidarity with Iraq and urged the government to adopt a more neutral stance in the crisis. As a result, the government was faced with the anomalous situation of having sent thousands of Pakistani troops to defend Saudi Arabia, while at the same time thousands more Pakistanis were volunteering to fight on the side of Iraq.<sup>39</sup>

Opposition to the war came from across the Pakistani political spectrum and reached even the highest echelons of the government. In a speech delivered in early January 1990, General Aslam Beg, the Army Chief-of-Staff, compared the struggles of Muslims in Palestine, Kashmir and Afghanistan and then went on to praise the 'spirit of defiance of the people of Iraq against the strategic military intimidation of the might of the mightiest of the world'. General Beg attributed the lack of popular support for the war to the issue of Israel and the Palestinian problem. He explained that 'the distrust of the United States among the people of Pakistan is because they fully know that Israel's security interests are dearer to it than anyone else'.<sup>40</sup> President Ghulam Ishaq Khan also declared that if Israel attacked Iraq, a possibility which the United States tried desperately to avert, Pakistan would side with Muslims.<sup>41</sup>

The Pakistani government tried to address these concerns by stressing that its troops were in Saudi Arabia to defend the holy cities of Mecca and Medina. In a last-ditch effort to avert the ground war, Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, on 22 January 1991, visited the capitals of six Muslim countries – Tehran, Ankara, Damascus, Amman, Cairo, and Riyadh – and called for a cessation of the bombing of Iraq and an Iraqi withdrawal from Kuwait, but to no avail.<sup>42</sup>

## THE FUTURE DIRECTION OF PAKISTAN'S FOREIGN POLICY

The catastrophic effects of the second Persian Gulf war on the economic development of the Middle East has sorely tested Pakistan's foreign policy.

Like many of the Arab and Asian countries that relied on the export of labour as a major source of foreign exchange earnings, Pakistan has suffered bitterly from the upheaval caused by the war. A small consolation for Pakistan is the possibility that Kuwait plans to reduce by one million its dependence on non-Kuwaiti labour, and that it will look to Asians, not Arabs, to fill the remaining positions for expatriates.<sup>43</sup> Nevertheless, the gap between the rich and the poor nations has widened considerably. Pakistan will not be receiving any large-scale assistance from the Gulf countries for the immediate future. The devastation which the war inflicted on the oil-producing economies of the Gulf states was too enormous for them to continue their regional development plans and other foreign-aid projects.

Pakistan will continue to have an important role in the region's security in the aftermath of the war, although how large a role is another question. On 6 February 1991, Secretary of State James Baker stated to the House Foreign Affairs Committee, that the United States 'would expect the states of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) to take the lead in building a reinforcing network of new and strengthened security ties' and that 'no regional state should be excluded from these arrangements'.<sup>44</sup> Although this statement was primarily directed as a conciliatory overture to Iran and a future Iraq, Pakistan would obviously have a role to play as well.

The Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan changed the region's strategic equation. As a result, Pakistan's value to the United States as an ally in its policy of containment of the Soviet Union also decreased. Despite its past efforts to have itself regarded as a part of the Middle East, Pakistan's geographical location renders it somewhat removed from the operational theatre of the Gulf. As a result, the threat posed by India will most likely occupy Pakistan's full attention in the immediate future.

The second Gulf war gave new impetus of Islamic solidarity in the region. From its earliest days, Pakistan's foreign policy has always stressed Islam and looked to the Muslim world for support. Yet, even as President Bush's 'New World Order' found its equivalent in the 'New Arab Order', certain fissures have developed in the elusive ideal of Islamic solidarity. The Damascus Declaration of 6 March 1990 called for Syria and Egypt to form the nucleus of an Arab peace force which would include the GCC countries and guarantee the security of the Arab

countries of the Gulf. In return, the GCC states would provide all financing, including economic support, for the two countries.

Since then, however, Saudi Arabia has had second thoughts about the Arab peace force. Alarmed by the number of Arabs in North Africa and the Middle East who sympathised with Saddam Hussein, and stunned by the domestic criticism of the country's lack of a defence capability in the face of Iraqi aggression, Saudi Arabia has decided to embark on a programme to make the kingdom militarily self-sufficient. Plans were announced to double the size of the Saudi armed forces to 250,000 within five years, and other GCC countries have also indicated that they intend to follow the Saudi example.<sup>45</sup>

Despite the plans for military independence, the GCC countries have in fact become even more dependent on US protection as a consequence of the war. A certain anomaly exists in this dependence, as overt collaboration with the American forces could undermine the legitimacy of their regimes at home and weaken their credibility in Arab circles. It may well be, therefore, that Pakistan could be called upon to play a larger role in the defence of the Gulf. Political considerations might require that US forces be limited to a large naval presence in the Gulf; while tanks and other military supplies would have to be pre-positioned in countries throughout the region, including in Pakistan.

Although the United States has invested billions of dollars in Pakistan's military and economic development, a certain ambivalence continues to exist in US-Pakistani relations. Part of this stems from the nuclear issue but part also stems from Pakistan's identification with Arab and Islamic causes. Both of these strains stem from the historical tendencies of Pakistan's foreign policy to seek security on the subcontinent and support from the Muslim world. Despite the changes in the strategic equation since 1988, Pakistan's sheer size and status as a non-Arab Muslim nation will continue to insure its role as an important player in the region.

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43. Amy Kaslow, 'Shifting Fortunes in Arab World', *Christian Science Monitor*, 26 June 1991, p. 7.
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45. Peter Ford, 'Gulf States Reorienting Future Security Strategy', *Christian Science Monitor*, 3 June 1991, p. 1.

# 8 Indian Power Projection in South Asia and the Regional States' Reaction

Mushahid Hussain

## I. CHANGING REGIONAL CONTEXT

The countries of South Asia in the region around one of the most strategic and populous parts of the Third World are witnessing some of the most important changes in their history since they achieved Independence after the Second World War. Not only is the entire region being transformed, but new realities are virtually reshaping the political map of the area, shaking off old assumptions and injecting new perspectives. The end of the cold War has introduced a new era of Superpower coordination, which was first manifested in their collaborative efforts to end the long-standing Gulf War and which, in 1990, is being reflected in the coordination of Moscow and Washington towards the Gulf crisis.

Concurrently, these changes have brought about unprecedented re-appraisal of outlooks in state policies, thereby serving as a catalyst for political rapprochement among various countries, including China and the Soviet Union, China and India, Iran and the Soviet Union, Iran and Iraq, Saudi Arabia and the Soviet Union. Then there is the emergence of a political identity of various peoples of South Asia, rooted in their religion, which is finding expression in a quest for self-determination similar to the spirit that fuelled the Muslim struggle for sovereign statehood in the South Asian subcontinent in 1947. The Two-Nation Theory which formed the *raison d'être* of Pakistan can now be seen to have been validated since, 43 years after Partition, the Sikhs of East Punjab, the Muslims of Occupied Kashmir and the Hindus of Northern India are keen to carve out a political path and a distinct identity that is inspired by their respective faiths. Most of the countries of the region are either politically unstable or in a period of transition, with political instability aggravated by ethnic or other violent internal conflicts in India, Afghanistan, the Soviet Union, China, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Burma. In some, there is a state of insurgency and civil war, particularly in Afghanistan, Sri Lanka and the states of Kashmir and East Punjab.

Cumulatively, there is the unravelling of the post-World War II status quo in the region, in a process which is currently less intense and smaller in scale than the momentous events of 1989 in Eastern Europe. This process was initiated first with the partition of Pakistan in 1971, when India mid-wifed the Caesarian birth of Bangladesh with the Soviets supporting it with surgical precision. And this process was reinforced with the Islamic Revolution in Iran and the 1984 Indian military action against the Sikhs.

In the five years to 1990, the single most important development in south Asia has been India's quest for hegemony, with sustained pressures on smaller neighbours beginning with the 1986 Exercise Brasstacks, which was the biggest ever military manoeuvre for south Asia since Independence, followed by the 1987 military expedition into Sri Lanka, the 1988 military intervention in the Maldives, the 1989 economic strangulation of Nepal and the 1990 positioning of troops in an aggressive posture close to the Pakistan border following the uprising in Kashmir.

## II. INDIA'S MILITARY OUTLOOK IN SOUTH ASIA

Three separate military-related developments have helped to define India's military design during the 1990s. These developments, coupled with an important policy speech of the Indian Chief-of-Naval-Staff (CNS), help in providing a relationship between that country's defence and foreign policies. The first development in this regard was the allocation by the National Front Government of a record \$9.6 billion for defence during the current financial year, 1990, which is an increase by \$600 million over 1989. This increase of nearly 9 per cent is aimed at strengthening what is today the world's fourth largest standing army, backed by 728 combat aircraft and 32 warships, including two aircraft carriers and a nuclear submarine. India has also now developed the capability of an intermediate-range ballistic missile, with its test-firing of 'Agni', which has a range of 2500 kilometres.

The second significant development is the annual report of the Ministry of Defence, which links India's military concerns with Pakistan and China. Predictably, it accuses Pakistan of fomenting popular uprising among the Muslims in Occupied Kashmir and the Sikhs in East Punjab, adding that relations between Pakistan and India have suffered a 'serious setback' during the last year. The report also talks of Pakistan's plans to transfer combat aircraft to Bangladesh', warning that 'these developments have to be monitored'. The Defence Ministry report does not make any

mention of India's own role in provoking regional tensions, particularly its singular failure to evolve a friction-free relationship with any of its neighbours.

The third major development pertaining to the Indian military is the final return of the Indian troops from Sri Lanka, after what is clearly a major political, military and diplomatic humiliation. The Indian expedition into Sri Lanka, which cost around \$1.7 billion, resulted in 1150 deaths and 3000 injuries. During its 32 months occupation in Sri Lanka, the total number of Indian troops at the height of the Indian involvement was 75,000. What is significant is that in its first attempt since 1971, to project its military power in the region as part of its broader grand design, the Indian army not only failed to achieve any of its goals but has returned badly bruised and demoralised in circumstances similar to the forcible exit of Israeli troops from South Lebanon.

The Indian expeditionary forces in Sri Lanka earned a popular hatred of both the Sinhalese and the Tamils, something rare in that strife-torn country. It failed to suppress the Tamil insurgency; its presence in Sri Lanka was a major point of contention between Colombo and Delhi, forcing the first ever postponement of the SAARC Summit since the inception of this organisation. The Sri Lankan government had consistently maintained that it would not attend the Summit, scheduled for December 1989, as long as Indian troops remained present on Sri Lankan soil. What was initially termed 'a necessary projection of Indian power' by the Indian High Commissioner in Sri Lanka, who is now holding the same position in Pakistan, turned out to be an exercise that divided not only the Indian polity, but even the national security establishment itself. The Chief Minister of the Indian State of Tamil Nadu refused to welcome the returning Indian army in Madras because he accused it of killing 5000 Tamils in Sri Lanka, describing this act as 'a serious matter'. The Indian expeditionary army's commander, Lt.-Gen. A. S. Kalkat, even went to the extent of indirectly accusing Indian intelligence of misleading the Indian army about the combat strength of the Tamils. He said: 'We captured 2500 weapons from the Tamil guerillas, almost four times the figure given to us by the intelligence agency'.

It is in this context that India's Chief-of-Naval-Staff, Admiral J. G. Nadkarni, delivered an interesting speech at a recent Seminar on 'foreign and defence policies for India in the 1990s'.<sup>1</sup> This speech provided the first authoritative insight from an Indian military leader into Indian perceptions of Pakistan and their own view of their future role. Three aspects of Admiral Nadkarni's remarks regarding Pakistan are important. First, in the Indian view, Pakistan will be 'unwilling to come to terms with



us for some more years to come'. This view is based on the premise that the 'value of Pakistan to the United States as a strategic ally will remain substantially undiminished', as will 'our problems in Punjab and Kashmir'. Second, Indian military planners see the injection of the nuclear factor as being important in the bilateral Pakistan-India equation. The CNS talked of 'the growing evidence of Pakistan's de facto nuclear capability and there can be very little doubt now that Pakistan has either achieved nuclear weapon capability already or is very close to achieving it'. The conclusion that Admiral Nadkarni derived from this assessment of Pakistan's nuclear capability was that 'Pakistan would be able to establish a deterrent nuclear posture against India, rendering in the process the balance of conventional forces considerably less significant than it is today'.

The third aspect of the Indian view of Pakistan is Admiral Nadkarni's admission that 'we have never been in a position where we could overrun Pakistan through a conventional offensive', although he did single out Pakistan as the one country which India always dealt with through 'military means'. He added that 'all other countries including China were essentially to be handled diplomatically'.

The Indian Naval Chief referred to his country's perceived regional importance as 'the perception that India's newly-acquired military capabilities have reached beyond her borders and she is thus in a position to influence regional developments politically'. He also cited four events in the 1980s that, in his view, projected the Indian image of a regional power, namely, the Indian intervention in Sri Lanka and the Maldives, the acquisition of a nuclear submarine from the Soviet Union, and the Agni missile.

For the future, Admiral Nadkarni advocated a *two-pronged strategy* for India to strengthen its resolve of being a regional power. *First*, he advocated the continued growth of Indian naval power, since, in his view, 'major powers begin to regard a country as a regional power when she begins to demonstrate her ability to interfere with their freedom of action in that region'. The Indian CNS clearly expects his Navy to play such a role in the future. *Second*, he urged 'the growing need to bring diplomacy and military power in face with each other, as it is necessary for India to also project a complementary image of military power in the region'. This is seen by Admiral Nadkarni as vital 'if we are to gradually displace the substantial extra-regional presence in the area.' He added that it is the extra-regional powers' 'substantial and visible military presence which gives them an aura of power in the eyes of the concerned nations'.

Notwithstanding this glorified self-image, India's basic problem remains its failure to achieve recognition as a regional power, both within the region as well as outside it. India is still slotted as the Soviet Union's best friend in the Third World, as a country 40 per cent of whose population still lives below the poverty line and whose democratic experience is marred by recurring bouts of internecine violence on communal, caste and ethnic lines. Sri Lanka has reinforced that failure of India, indeed its craving, for regional-power status.

The Indian attitude towards smaller neighbours is not an aberration in Indian foreign policy, but a part of a pattern which is now quite consistent. Two aspects of this pattern of behaviour of India in relation to smaller neighbours are noteworthy: at one level it is an expression of a certain pettiness and small-mindedness on issues that are seemingly trivial as well as having an humanitarian aspect. The other aspect of this pattern is the increasing militarisation of Indian state and foreign policy, in which the projection and expression of military power is deemed central to its political clout in the region. The attempt to virtually choke off all food supplies to Nepal, which amounted to an attempt to starve India's smaller neighbour, is probably the most reprehensible act of domination by any bigger country against a smaller neighbour in recent international politics, far worse morally and politically than what the Americans did in Grenada or the Russians in Afghanistan.

Nepal was simply being 'punished' for pursuing an independent foreign policy. But Nepal's is certainly not an isolated case in South Asia. India has consistently refused to redefine its relationship with Bhutan, which wants to delete certain clauses of an unequal treaty with India that infringes its sovereignty. India has reneged on a commitment to Bangladesh regarding a regional programme to alleviate its recurring problems of floods. India has also backed out of its commitment to return 'Jinnah House' to Pakistan, which would serve as the Consulate General of Pakistan in Bombay, though it would be fitting that this be located in the residence of the Quaid-i-Azam, since it is not in use otherwise. To date, India has simply failed to honour this commitment.

Apart from this niggardly attitude, Indian policy is also characterised by blatant double standards that border on hypocrisy. While building up a massive military arsenal for itself, without any visible outside threat, India wails whenever Pakistan attempts to refurbish its own obsolete military equipment even on a modest scale. Professions of non-alignment notwithstanding, India eggs on the United States to exercise pressure on Pakistan in regards to its nuclear programme, thereby encouraging a Superpower to interfere in the internal affairs of a sovereign country. India

itself has been the biggest violator of another precept of non-alignment, non-interference in the internal affairs of other countries, by fomenting separatism in Sri Lanka and Sindh. And India has gone nuclear itself, while crying hoarse about Pakistan's nuclear programme.

The militarisation of the Indian state and its foreign policy is proceeding at a faster pace than is realised by most observers. Ironically, the Indian bullying of Nepal coincided with a cover story on India in the American Magazine *Time*, in its issue of 3 April, 1989. Despite Indian denials, the point made by the American magazine's story is quite valid and it is borne out by facts. Apart from Israel, India is probably the only country in the world which has physically extended its boundaries through military conquests after the Second World War. Since 1947, the Indian Army has marched into Junagarh, Hyderabad, Kashmir, Goa and Sikkim. In the last five years, India has liberally used its military machine both against domestic dissidents and in the surrounding region. In 1984, the Indian Army launched 'Operation Blue Star' against the Sikhs, in much the same fashion as the Pakistan Army against the Bengalis in East Pakistan. Since 1985, India has been encouraging the dissidents in the Chittagong Hill tracts in Bangladesh. In 1986, the Indian Army tried to put pressure on Pakistan through 'Exercise Brasstacks'. In 1987, there was the Indian military intervention in Sri Lanka, in 1988 in the Maldives and in 1989, although it did not use military power, India tried to pressure and bully Nepal.

Within India, parts of the North East (Assam), Occupied Kashmir and Punjab are virtually under a state of Martial Law, with the Indian Army engaged in punitive operations against the local population. During a difficult election year, such militarism could be a political plus for Rajiv Gandhi's Congress Party. This is reflected in ringing endorsements of the Rajiv line on foreign policy by the Indian media. Writing in the *International Herald Tribune* an Indian editor was full of praise for Rajiv's attempts to impose Indian domination in south Asia: 'in the South Asian region the relatively inexperienced Mr Gandhi has given Indians grounds for being proud of their country. More successful in this respect than his statesmanlike grandfather, Pandit Nehru, or his formidable mother, Indira Gandhi, he has fenced out India's sphere of influence, not only marking it strictly out of bounds for political trespassers but spelling out what those who live on the compound can and cannot do.' He added that 'Pakistan is, in a sense, the one totally independent country left in the region, along with India'.

It is therefore not surprising that the Indians would like to maintain the pressure on Pakistan, notwithstanding the transition from military rule to

democracy. The annual report of the Indian Defence Ministry is a case in point since it reflects the anti-Pakistan rhetoric on defence purchases and the nuclear programme that has been heard frequently from New Delhi in recent years.

### III. UPRISING IN KASHMIR

The uprising in Occupied Kashmir presents the first serious possibility of altering the political status quo in South Asia since the emergence of Bangladesh in 1971. The Kashmir uprising, coupled with a virtual state of insurgency among the Sikhs in East Punjab, provides a situation where two regions under Indian control, both having a non-Hindu majority, are in revolt. Five different facts related to the situation in and around Occupied Kashmir best sum up the current state of affairs:

- (1) For the first time in 42 years since Independence, India sought – and received – Pakistan assistance on an issue it has always claimed to be an ‘internal affair’, namely, Occupied Kashmir, when Pakistan was asked to help in the release of Dr Rabiya Saeed (the daughter of India’s Home Minister), a role which expedited her release.
- (2) The Indian Home Minister, Mufti Mohammad Saeed, categorically stated in a press interview that ‘all elections in Jammu & Kashmir, barring 1977, were rigged’.
- (3) In a statement published in the 10 March 1990 issue of *the Times of India*, from a group of some of the 40,000 Hindus who are said to have fled the Kashmir Valley since the uprising, it was stated: ‘The biggest exodus of Hindus since partition is going on in Kashmir and nobody seems to be bothered. We are losing our property and our lives. We desperately need government protection. Without us that place is a virtual Pakistan.’
- (4) In a resolution, published in the 1 March 1990 issue of *the Times of India*, after a meeting held in Amritsar the All India Sikh Students Federation (AISSF) urged the ‘Sikhs to support Pakistan in the event of a war with India’.
- (5) S. S. Mann, the Sikh Akali Dal leader in East Punjab, refused to take an oath in Parliament despite winning his seat in an election and he has been consistently demanding that there should be a plebiscite held in East Punjab under United Nations auspices to determine the right of self-determination of the Sikhs.

The Uprising in Kashmir is seen in Pakistan from four different perspectives. First, Pakistanis are pleased that, unlike 1965, when Pakistan tried and failed to foment an uprising in Kashmir, this time it is purely an indigenous upsurge rooted in decades of deprivation and alienation from the rulers in Delhi. Second, in this age of self-determination, which has recently been manifested in Eastern Europe and even in the Soviet Union, Pakistan feels that its case for a plebiscite in Kashmir, which has the endorsement of the United Nations, is legally and morally strong.

Pakistan bases its case for self-determination of the people of Jammu and Kashmir on the basis of successive UN resolutions calling for 'a free and impartial plebiscite'. These resolutions were passed on 13 August 1948 and 5 January 1949 by the United Nations Commission on India and Pakistan (UNCIP) – resolutions which India initially accepted but later reneged on, on the plea that Pakistan, by entering into a military alliance with the United States, had altered the region's security environment. Since these resolutions, Pakistan has never considered the status of Kashmir to have been settled, notwithstanding the *de facto* situation.

No government in Pakistan can expect to survive politically if it accepts the *de facto* situation as being final, and neither can any government politically afford to take a 'soft line' on Kashmir at a time when the area is in such a turmoil.

The ferment in Kashmir needs to be viewed in the context of the general unrest that is evident in the strategic 'Islamic Crescent of Conflict' which begins at Israel and goes through to India with the *Intifada* in Palestine, the struggles in Lebanon and Afghanistan, the stirrings in Azerbaijan and the uprising in Kashmir.

The situation in Occupied Kashmir today is actually 'India's Bangladesh'. While Pakistan refused to accept the election results in 1971, India blatantly rigged the 1987 election in Occupied Kashmir, and the 1989 election in India had no *locus standi* in Occupied Kashmir since there was hardly a 2 per cent turnout. In both cases there is a lack of legitimacy in the actions of the Central Government, and the military crackdown is the inevitable result. Just as the Pakistani Army eventually ended up as an army of occupation in Bangladesh, the Indian Army clearly falls in the same category and it is behaving exactly as an army of occupation would behave.

In neither Occupied Kashmir nor in Bangladesh in 1971 was there a political option left for the Central Government, and in both instances the foreign media were unceremoniously removed in the expectation that the truth would not come out. While Bangladesh was created in December 1971 because of India's successful coordination of its political, military

and diplomatic moves, the outcome of the uprising in Occupied Kashmir remains to be seen, although the situation on the ground is exactly the same as in East Pakistan in 1971.

Unlike 1971, when the domestic position in Pakistan was very weak but its international position was quite strong, the reverse seems to be the case now, with a fairly stable civilian democratic government at both the Federal and the Provincial levels but with little substantive international support on the Kashmir issue.

Two factors are positive for Pakistan in the present situation. First, India can no longer be assured of solid and unstinted Soviet diplomatic or military support on the Kashmir issue, as was the case 30 years ago. The Soviets have stopped looking at Pakistan through Indian eyes, a change in attitude best exemplified during Mikhail Gorbachev's visit to India in November 1986 and by the subsequent restraining role of the USSR on India during its 'Exercise Brasstacks'. Second, India is today on the defensive diplomatically and its international image has been considerably tarnished as a consequence of its brutal suppression of the uprising in Occupied Kashmir. The international media have tended to equate the brutality of the Indian action in Kashmir with some other repressions, like that by the Israelis against the *Intifada* of the Palestinians, the Soviets against the people of Azerbaijan, and the Chinese in Tien An Men. Additionally, the Congress Party and the Nehru family, both pillars of the Indian Establishment, have suffered humiliation at the hands of the Indian electorate, India's secularism has received a blow from the resurgent Hindu chauvinism and, like the Israelis after their failure in Southern Lebanon, the Indian Army has returned bruised from Sri Lanka.

#### IV. INDIA'S AMERICAN CONNECTION

The Americans have been changing their attitude towards India and this is best reflected in two specific areas. First, the United States endorsed the Indian military intervention in Sri Lanka in July 1987, which was the first Indian military move outside its borders since 1971. In return for American support, the Indians maintained a studied silence on the US military move in the Persian Gulf during the peak of the Iran-Iraq war, although the Indians had generally been very critical of American naval presence in the region. Second, during 1986-8 the US Secretary of Defense twice visited India, the first such visit by a ranking American military official. During the same period the Americans have significantly enhanced their military and technological cooperation with India,

including the sale of Super Computers, which can reportedly aid India's missile capability. The U.S. has also provided collaborative support in the manufacture of India's Light Combat Aircraft (LCA).

Ironically, India, which has always taken pains to present Pakistan as a camp follower of the United States, itself has not hesitated to play ball with the U.S., even at the expense of professed principles, when it deems it to be in its national interest. For instance, even while it was an American ally in SEATO, Pakistan refused to even nominally support American involvement in Vietnam. Conversely, India quietly accepted the American decision to intervene militarily in Indochina, since it viewed this move as a deterrence against China. As documented in a recent study by Professors Sisson and Rose, 'it was only in the later half of 1967 following Mrs Gandhi's visit to Moscow, when the Soviet leaders made it clear that their decision on arms aid to Pakistan would be linked to the Indian position on Vietnam, that New Delhi began to become more critical of US policy in Vietnam'.<sup>2</sup> Another example, as documented by Ambassador and currently Senator Daniel Moynihan, the CIA directly provided funds to Mrs Indira Gandhi in her capacity as Congress Party President in 1960, when Nehru was Prime Minister, to support it in the electoral contests against the Communist Party of India in Kerala and West Bengal.<sup>3</sup>

After the 1962 Sino-Indian conflict, India gleefully and eagerly accepted American military aid, although it spend the greater part of the 1950s in denouncing similar American military assistance to Pakistan, while Nehru, the standard-bearer of non-alignment was in the saddle all through this period.

## V. SOUTH ASIA: THE SOVIET VIEW

If the Americans have been looking anew at South Asia, with current Pakistan-American relations going through a crisis following the suspension of US aid, the Soviets too have been changing their outlook on south Asia, particularly on Pakistan.

The Soviets have stopped seeing Pakistan from India's point of view, and the first reflection of this was in November 1986, when Mikhail Gorbachev, during his visit to India, refused to be provoked into criticising Pakistan's Afghan policy or to endorse aggressive Indian designs in 'Exercise Brasstacks'. In order to underline their strong disagreement with the Indian exercise directed against Pakistan, the soviets took a symbolic step in temporarily stopping fuel for the MiG-25 planes which they had supplied to the Indians.

Regarding Kashmir, the Soviets have been more reasonable and understanding of Pakistan's position than the United States. For example, when Benazir's Envoy, Iqbal Akhund met Eduard Shevardnadze in Moscow in February 1990, the Soviet Foreign Minister told him during their private conversation that 'the Soviet Union now support the principle of self-determination within the Soviet Union, in Eastern Europe or elsewhere'; he added that the Soviets would prefer its resolution 'by consensus and dialogue'. The Soviets told Pakistan that the Indian Foreign Secretary, S. K. Singh, had earlier come to Moscow 'at his own initiative'. The Soviets also told Pakistan that, while they were opposed to interference in internal affairs, they also supported the principle of non-use of force to settle political problems.

Conversely, the United States made it clear, regarding Kashmir, that:

- it no more supports a plebiscite in Kashmir;
- in the event of war between Pakistan and India over Kashmir, the US will be neutral;
- the US is opposed to internationalising the Kashmiri issue and it has also opposed Pakistan's taking the Kashmir issue up in the Organisation of Islamic Countries (OIC);
- in the case of 'hard evidence' which the US may find of Pakistani active support to the Kashmiri freedom fighters, the US will be liable to stop military and economic assistance to Pakistan since this would be a case, in the eyes of US law, of 'State-supported terrorism'.

Significantly, in the first instance of Soviet public criticism of the Indian nuclear position, the Soviet Government daily, *Izvestia* (4 May 1990), strongly criticised the Indian nuclear programme. In effect, *Izvestia* questioned the peaceful credentials of India's nuclear programme given the Indian failure to sign the *Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty* (NPT). Equally significantly, *Izvestia* said 'Pakistan suggested turning South Asia into a nuclear free zone, but India has not responded to these proposals.'

Within this context, *President Ghulam Ishaq Khan* in his speech to Parliament on 8 November, which set the contours of Pakistan's foreign policy, applauded the 'realistic and bold policies' of the Soviet leadership towards Eastern Europe and then acknowledged Soviet assistance in putting Pakistan on the path of industrial development, adding that Pakistan-Soviet relations 'are not obstructed by any friction'. In the same speech, the President hoped that relations with the United States would 'not impinge on our sovereignty nor should we be expected to barter away our basic national principles' in return for American aid.



NOTES

1. For the text of Admiral Nadkarni's Speech, see the *Telegraph* (Calcutta), 23–25 March 1990.
2. Richard Sisson and Leo E. Rose, *War and Secession: Pakistan, India and the Creation of Bangladesh* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990) p. 314.
3. Daniel P. Moynihan, *A Dangerous Place* (1986) p. 410.

# 9 The Kashmir Dispute: Prospects for Conflict Resolution

Robert G. Wirsing

## INTRODUCTION<sup>1</sup>

In a recently published book that reflects very thoughtfully on the preconditions for reaching international agreement in regional disputes, the scholar-diplomat Richard N. Haass maintains that much of what presently constitutes mainstream writing on negotiation is focused either on the negotiating process, where the emphasis is on technique, style and approach, or on conflict resolution, where emphasis is on the promotion of formulas aimed at eliminating the grounds for disagreement. Too little attention, he suggests, is given to the larger geopolitical context, where much of the reason for the success or failure of negotiations is actually to be found.<sup>2</sup> Most of the time, according to Haass, eliminating the sources of conflict simply isn't possible; hence, diplomacy that focuses on rooting them out is very likely to be frustrated. Better, he says, that peacemakers focus on the more modest objectives of conflict *management* than for their efforts to perish on the field of conflict *resolution*.

When he turns to the South Asian conflict between India and Pakistan, Haass finds nothing in its geopolitical context to bolster confidence in a diplomacy that is aimed too largely at conflict resolution. In present circumstances, he writes,

it is tempting to turn to traditional diplomacy. Suggesting that India and Pakistan intensify traditional diplomatic efforts to resolve their territorial disputes is always an option. Another is negotiations toward agreements placing quantitative or qualitative ceilings on armaments, either at existing levels or eventually at lower levels. In both instances the good offices of the United States or other third parties could be made available to India and Pakistan. Yet these and related diplomatic measures are likely to have a limited impact. Traditional diplomacy, which often focuses implicitly on the root causes of disputes, would almost certainly fail. Territorial differences will likely continue to resist

solution. More formal arms control, for example reductions in forces, is out of reach given that India harbors regional ambitions all around the Indian Ocean and in any case sizes its forces not simply against Pakistan but also against China. The atmosphere is poisoned by each country's fears that in an effort to distract and weaken its central government the other country is aiding and manipulating internal tensions (India believes Pakistan aids Sikh separatists, Pakistan believes India aids Sindhi separatists). What all this does is ensure that a climate of mistrust and suspicion will continue to characterize Indo-Pakistani relations.<sup>3</sup>

'The South Asian problem,' he concludes, like that of a number of other protracted regional conflicts around the world, 'is unripe for solution.'<sup>4</sup>

Haass's judgement is discouraging. It offers little hope to those who seek some way out of the high-cost, high-risk military competition that currently prevails in south Asia. It casts doubt even on the title of this paper; and it clearly runs against the grain of American optimism. The instinct of most of us, I think, is to resist it. Resistance will not be easy, however, given the record of India-Pakistan relations. That relationship has, in general, been markedly conflictual; and the particular dimension of this relationship which we focus upon in this chapter – the longstanding dispute over the strategically sensitive area of Kashmir – on the face of it clearly warrants a certain amount of pessimism. Among the territorial disputes that have surfaced around the world since the Second World War, this one has without doubt stood with those most defiant of peaceful solution.

The Kashmir dispute was at the root of the first war between India and Pakistan in the years immediately following partition of the subcontinent in 1947. And it was the primary bone of contention between them when they went to war a second time in 1965. No doubt, it has receded in global consciousness in more recent years, particularly following India's successful assertion of subcontinental dominance in the third (Bangladesh) war. The 1972 Simla Agreement terminating this war committed India and Pakistan to put an end to the confrontation between them and to work towards a durable peace. Among other things, it bound them to refrain from the threat or use of force in violation of the new line of control (LOC) in Jammu and Kashmir, and to meet and discuss a final settlement of the Jammu and Kashmir question.<sup>5</sup> The conciliatory spirit of Simla turned out to be short-lived, however, and the Kashmir territorial issue continued to fester as before. In fact, routine skirmishing between Indian and Pakistani armed forces on the poorly marked LOC became a staple of

their relationship; and no government-to-government discussions in regard to a final settlement of the Kashmir dispute were ever held.

More recent developments in the Kashmir dispute have been a forceful reminder both of its continuing volatility and of its seeming intractability. One of these developments was the eruption in 1984 of severe fighting over possession of the Siachen Glacier. The glacier stands in a remote part of northern Jammu and Kashmir, some miles beyond the northern terminus of the LOC. The fighting, mainly over control of several passes giving access to the glacier's southern rim, has engaged thousands of troops under extremely difficult conditions. It has already cost thousands of lives. Five rounds of negotiations between 1986 and 1989 have failed to resolve the dispute.

Most remarkable of recent developments in Kashmir, however, was the spread of separatist violence and the nearly complete breakdown of civil authority that occurred during the two years from 1988 to 1990 on the Indian side of the LOC. Separatist sentiments had been on the rise in Jammu and Kashmir, the only state in India with a Muslim majority, for several years. Separatist groups, some of them demanding union with Pakistan, more of them complete independence for Kashmir, had become increasingly radicalised and vocal. The separatist movement began to take a violent turn around July 1988; and from then on anti-establishment terrorist actions became a progressively severe challenge to India's control of the densely populated and overwhelmingly Muslim Valley of Kashmir. In Srinagar, the Muslim Conference/Congress-I coalition state government under Chief Minister Dr Farooq Abdullah quickly revealed itself isolated and unable to contain the violence. In January 1990, with the situation threatening to get completely out of hand, the newly-elected central government of Prime Minister V. P. Singh forced Abdullah's resignation, placed the state under direct rule from New Delhi, and launched a massive military crackdown on the separatists. These steps triggered anti-government demonstrations that were without precedent in the state either in size or in intensity of anti-Indian emotions. Alienated by what even most Indian observers conceded had been decades of economic neglect, police-state tactics, and cynical manipulation by New Delhi of the Kashmiri government, Kashmiri Muslims by the tens of thousands openly threw their support to the militant separatists. By mid-August 1990, over 1000 people had been slain in the Kashmiri uprising and no end to the violence was in sight.<sup>6</sup>

Indian Kashmir's rapid descent into chaos had a predictably deleterious impact on India-Pakistan relations. Pakistan was presented with an unparalleled opportunity both to resurrect its near-moribund demand for

Kashmiri self-determination and, at the same time, to call the world's attention to its neighbour's shortcomings in regard to human rights and the practice of democracy. Never before had conditions in Indian Kashmir been quite so ideally tailored for direct Pakistani meddling; and in one form or another, and with or without the formal blessings of the central government, Pakistanis unquestionably meddled.<sup>7</sup> Meanwhile, Indians debated among themselves how much importance to attach to the 'foreign hand' in the crisis. A far from negligible number insisted that India's political mismanagement – and not Pakistan's sinister designs – bore the lion's share of responsibility for the nearly complete collapse of Indian authority in the Valley. The government, however, charged Pakistan with very grave acts of intervention; and many Indians seemed to agree.<sup>8</sup> Allegations surfaced in the summer of 1989 that President Zia, freed of the burden of Soviet intervention in Afghanistan, had launched a covert destabilisation programme in Indian Kashmir shortly before his death.<sup>9</sup> Near the end of 1989, both India and Pakistan began a massive arms buildup along their lengthy border. In early 1990, New Delhi announced a major increase in its annual defence outlay.<sup>10</sup> And by the summer of 1990, major clashes between Indian and Pakistani troops were being reported along the LOC in Kashmir.<sup>11</sup>

We need not belabour the point any further. Clearly, the record of fighting in and over Kashmir does not point in the direction of a quick and easy solution. Haass's verdict on India–Pakistan relations, on the surface at least, doesn't seem far-fetched.

We should observe, however, that the record of the Kashmir conflict is not entirely unmixed and that one can certainly find in it grounds for less dreary assessments. Indeed, India's recent troubles in Kashmir burst upon the scene at a time when prospects for improvement in India–Pakistan relations seemed, at least to some observers, to be the best in years. President Zia ul-Haq's death in an air crash in August 1988 had paved the way for free democratic elections in Pakistan and the emergence as Prime Minister of the youthful and Western-educated Benazir Bhutto. Born after partition and naturally resentful of the dominant role played by the army in the country's politics, she seemed a good choice for moving Pakistan towards reconciliation with India. Steps taken in the early months of her prime ministership were clearly aimed in that direction. At the fourth conference of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation, held in Islamabad in late December 1988, she met for three days of talks with Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi. The event, marking the first official visit of an Indian Prime Minister to Pakistan in 28 years, culminated with the signing by the two Prime Ministers of three accords, including a

promising arms-control agreement not to attack each other's nuclear installations.<sup>12</sup> The two nations also seemed to make progress in negotiations over the Siachen Glacier dispute. In bilateral talks on this issue in Islamabad in mid-June 1989, the two sides seemed on the edge of agreement. Rajiv returned to Islamabad in mid-July for a formal state visit; but by that time the traditional animosity had already reasserted itself and the negotiations over Siachen were soon suspended.

Side-by-side with these not altogether discouraging intra-regional developments were a number of startling global developments that seemed to many to hold greater potential for conflict resolution in South Asia than anything going on within the region itself. I refer, of course, to the virtual end of the Cold War rivalry between the United States and the Soviet Union, and also to the parallel and only slightly less significant thaw in Sino-Soviet relations. With the removal of the last Soviet troops from Afghanistan, in February 1989, went any plausible threat of direct Indo-Soviet military collusion against Pakistan. With their removal also went at least some of the motivation for Sino-Pakistani military cooperation. Gone, it seemed, was any significant danger of a superpower military confrontation anywhere in the vicinity of the subcontinent. Gone, too, was some of the strategic significance of Kashmir. In its place was unprecedented cooperation between Moscow and Washington against the Iraqi regime's seizure of Kuwait in August 1990, as well as undreamt of possibilities for joint US-Soviet management of other regional conflicts. There was an apparent 'ripeness' in global affairs, in other words, that might compensate for the lack of it in India-Pakistan relations.

India and Pakistan seemed, in fact, curiously out of step with their superpower patrons. In an ironic reversal of past practice, they were proclaiming the need for an arms buildup while Soviet and American leaders were committing themselves ever more diligently to disarmament. While Moscow and Washington were moving at a spectacular pace to the settlement of one knotty Cold War problem after another, New Delhi and Islamabad were engaging in increasingly belligerent rhetoric over a boundary line that many thought had been tacitly accepted by both sides years earlier. Impatience with old arguments, including Pakistan's insistence on a UN-supervised plebiscite in Kashmir, was clearly mounting. It was reinforced by the new fear that if war came again to South Asia it might this time be fought with nuclear weapons.<sup>13</sup>

Notwithstanding Haass's widely-shared pessimism in regard to the potential for conflict resolution in South Asia, renewed pressures for a solution to the Kashmir conflict, from both within and without the region, were thus virtually inevitable. This chapter addresses the question of

whether such pressures are likely to bear fruit. It argues that Haass's judgement is more right than wrong, that the record of bilateral negotiations over Kashmir between India and Pakistan contains little to encourage optimism in regard to a settlement, and that for the foreseeable future pressures for conflict resolution on the basis of bilateral negotiations are likely to be unprofitable, if not counter-productive. In the face of deepening threats to stability both within India and Pakistan and in the relationship between them, this chapter contends that mere containment of the Kashmir dispute to its present proportions is challenge enough for subcontinental leaders. It observes that neither the United Nations, nor either of the superpowers, presently seem capable of effective intervention in this dispute; and that the avoidance of another war over Kashmir rests overwhelmingly, therefore, on the ability and willpower of Indian and Pakistani leaders to live with continuing territorial ambiguity in Kashmir.

#### DIRECT BILATERAL NEGOTIATIONS OVER KASHMIR: THE RECORD

The full record of efforts since 1947 pertaining to the amelioration of conflict between India and Pakistan is quite extensive. It includes various forms of mediation, arbitration, and peacekeeping, in addition to an array of direct bilateral negotiations. A chronology of major efforts relating directly to the Kashmir territorial dispute itself presents a formidable list [see Appendix I: p.191]. Among these Kashmir-related efforts there were some obvious successes and some equally obvious failures. Among the former were the cease-fire and truce agreements arranged by the UN Commission for India and Pakistan (UNCIP) in 1948 and 1949. Among the latter were the several attempts to mediate the Kashmir dispute by UN Representatives between 1950 and 1958.<sup>14</sup> Conspicuous among the failures in regard to Kashmir would also be all attempts made thus far to settle the issue through direct talks between India and Pakistan. It is this approach to conflict resolution – direct bilateral negotiation – that we focus on in this chapter. It is the only approach that has been applied specifically and explicitly to the Kashmir dispute since the failure of UN mediation efforts in 1958.<sup>15</sup> Moreover, both India and Pakistan committed themselves formally to this approach in the Simla Agreement of 1972, and ever since then India has stoutly resisted all attempts by Pakistan to bypass that agreement.

Let us observe at the outset that under the heading of India-Pakistan direct bilateral negotiations there is one encounter that most authorities

have considered highly successful: the Indus Waters Treaty of September 1960. Described in 1966, by India's foremost student of the Kashmir issue, as 'the most important problem which has been amicably settled between India and Pakistan',<sup>16</sup> the sharing of the waters of the Indus system had occupied statesmen of the two countries in extremely complex and difficult discussions for over a decade before yielding to solution. Though clearly a credit to its authors, the treaty resolved the problem by dividing the six rivers between the two states, not by creating any mechanism for cooperative management of them. Moreover, the treaty apparently depended for its successful conclusion on the active involvement and massive financial support of the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development.<sup>17</sup> Western capital for the construction of required link canals, in other words, not a conspicuous spirit of mutual accommodation, proved to be the effective ingredient in the negotiation's outcome. In any event, the Indus Waters Treaty was not directly concerned with the territorial matters of which the Kashmir dispute primarily consists. Those matters, whenever directly negotiated, have proved infinitely more difficult to resolve.

The Kashmir dispute has been discussed in bilateral talks between India and Pakistan on numerous occasions, in many different forums, and by officials of widely differing rank and importance. Since the cease-fire ending the first India-Pakistan war, however, settlement of the Kashmir dispute has been the explicit, primary objective in only three major high-level negotiations – the series of talks held between the Prime Ministers of India and Pakistan in July and August 1953, the talks held at the same level in May 1955, plus the six rounds of ministerial-level talks held between December 1962 and May 1963.<sup>18</sup>

The first of these talks were held in Karachi and New Delhi between Pakistani Prime Minister Mohammed Ali and Indian Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru in July–August 1953. The talks focused mainly on the Kashmir dispute, and in regard to it the two leaders reached a number of preliminary decisions. The joint press communiqué concluding the sessions in August reaffirmed the desirability of a fair and impartial plebiscite to determine the wishes of the people of Jammu and Kashmir, called for the appointment of expert committees to assist in resolving issues that had thus far stalled conduct of the plebiscite, and set the end of April 1954 as a deadline for the appointment of a Plebiscite Administrator. By December 1953, implementation of these decision was already stalled; and following an exchange of correspondence between the two Prime Ministers that lasted from August 1953 until September 1954, negotiations were broken off without agreement. Highlighted in the correspondence



had been Indian objections to the American military assistance to Pakistan then being negotiated.<sup>19</sup>

The second set of bilateral talks, again between Nehru and a Pakistani team led by Prime Minister Mohammed Ali, was held from 14 to 18 May, 1955, in New Delhi. The mood of these talks seemed constructive, and there was much talk in the Indian and Pakistani press about a 'new approach' and 'fresh ideas'. There was some speculation that the Pakistani negotiators had shown greater realism and flexibility in regard to the holding of a plebiscite.<sup>20</sup> The brief communique issued at the end of the talks revealed only that the leaders had discussed Kashmir fully and had decided to continue the talks at a later stage. Within weeks of the talks, however, the two countries were back to hurling accusations at one another over Kashmir, and the talks were not resumed.

The final series of direct negotiations between India and Pakistan over Kashmir was held between December 1962 and May 1963. Consisting of six rounds of talks, split among Rawalpindi, New Delhi, Karachi and Calcutta, this series was the most intensive and long-lasting of them all. It did not begin auspiciously. On the day the Indian delegation arrived in Rawalpindi for the first round of talks, Pakistan radio announced that the governments of Pakistan and the People's Republic of China had reached preliminary agreement on the boundary between China's Xinjiang province and the Pakistan-administered sector of northern Jammu and Kashmir – a development that was clearly ill-timed if not ill-intentioned. In large measure, the 1962–3 negotiations were the brain-child of the United States and Great Britain, who appear to have believed that the time was ripe for nudging their rival clients towards a settlement of the Kashmir problem. The Indian side had just experienced military defeat and humiliation at the hands of the Chinese Communist army in the border war of October–November 1962; and its pressing need for arms provided the West with an obvious opening. Unlike the earlier encounters, therefore, this one took place with India, in particular, clearly under some duress and, seemingly, more willing than usual to modify the Cease-Fire Line in a way advantageous to Pakistan. An Indian team, led by then Minister for Railways Sardar Swaran Singh, was prepared to concede up to 1500 square miles of Indian-held territory in Kashmir in return for Pakistan's acceptance of the modified line as a permanent international boundary.<sup>21</sup> According to this account, the chief Pakistani negotiator, then Foreign Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, flatly rejected the offer, telling Swaran Singh that the Valley was indivisible and that Pakistan had to have the whole of it.<sup>22</sup> Neither side appeared desirous of accepting responsibility for the failure of the talks, and so they dragged on for months with

very little likelihood of success. The joint communique concluding the sixth and final round reported simply that no agreement had been reached.

The 1962–3 talks were the last significant attempt by India and Pakistan explicitly to reach a settlement of the Kashmir dispute through direct bilateral negotiations. On at least three occasions thereafter, however, the question of whether or in what manner to include the Kashmir problem on the agenda of bilateral discussions between India and Pakistan was itself a significant issue. The first such occasion occurred soon after the Tashkent Declaration was signed, formally ending the 1965 war. In accord with the Declaration's provisions calling for direct talks between the two signatories in regard to their common problems, meetings were held in Rawalpindi between the Foreign Ministers of India and Pakistan on 1–2 March, 1966. The two sides failed to agree on Kashmir's inclusion on the formal agenda, however, and the talks were abruptly terminated.<sup>23</sup>

The second occasion was the Simla Conference of 28 June – 2 July 1972, following Pakistan's defeat in the Bangladesh war. The formal agenda for this summit meeting of the Prime Ministers of India and Pakistan, drawn up in April at Murree by emissaries of the two countries, had excluded any mention of Kashmir.<sup>24</sup> Why it was omitted is a bit puzzling, since the Indian emissary to the preparatory meeting at Murree wrote in a separate letter to his Pakistani counterpart, at the end of April, that India wanted Kashmir and the settlement of firm borders discussed at the summit meeting.<sup>25</sup> In any event, the topic of Kashmir was certainly raised by India at Simla. Bhutto appears to have argued, however, that he could not discuss it without raising suspicions among Pakistanis that the Simla peace agreement was a sell-out. According to an Indian observer, he pleaded for time, saying that the Kashmir issue could be postponed to a later date.<sup>26</sup> In the final agreement, which came when the summit seemed on the brink of failure, India got Pakistan's acceptance of a new cease-fire line (now designated a Line of Control) in Kashmir. This line replaced the UN-crafted and UN-supervised CFL, a substantial symbolic, even if very modest territorial, gain for India since it undermined the legal standing of a bothersome third party, the UN Military Observer Group in India and Pakistan (UNMOGIP), in the subcontinent at the same time as it seemed to draw Pakistan a bit closer to recognition of the line's permanence. India also wrung from Pakistan a commitment to bilateralism (the two countries would 'settle their differences by peaceful means mutually agreed upon between them'). In return for the promise of improved relations overall, however, Prime Minister Gandhi essentially settled for the status quo in Kashmir. Pakistan's commitment to bilateralism was seriously diluted (it agreed to respect the new line of control, but 'without prejudice to the

recognized position of either side', a qualification that left the door ajar for fresh Pakistani appeals for multilateral intervention). Discussions in regard to 'a final settlement on Jammu and Kashmir' were postponed indefinitely.<sup>27</sup> No such discussions have ever been held.

The third occasion was the series of talks that took place between January 1986 and June 1989 over the Siachen Glacier dispute. This dispute was obviously an offshoot of the Kashmir conflict. Hence, negotiations over it were virtually bound to involve the parent dispute. The most extensive of recent negotiations between India and Pakistan, the Siachen talks were also extraordinarily revealing of the problems that continue to haunt the conduct of bilateral negotiations between these two countries. They deserve closer examination.

### THE SIACHEN NEGOTIATIONS

The most extensive and important negotiations between India and Pakistan in the 1980s were the five rounds of talks over the Siachen Glacier that were conducted by delegations, led by the Defence Secretaries, between January 1986 and June 1989. Excepting the Indus waters negotiations, the Siachen talks ran longer than any other series of bilateral talks between India and Pakistan since independence was gained. When they began, Rajiv Gandhi was in power on the Indian side, Zia ul-Haq on the Pakistani side. When they ended, Rajiv was still in power in India, but in Pakistan Zia had been replaced by Benazir Bhutto. The negotiations were focused on the question of rightful possession of a wedge-shaped and uninhabited piece of territory, in size about 1000 square miles, that lay adjacent to China's Xinjiang border to the north of map coordinate NJ 9842 – the point in Jammu and Kashmir State at which both the CFL, agreed to in 1949, and the LOC, agreed to in 1972, reached their northern terminus. Fighting over this territory had broken out in the spring of 1984. By December 1985, when India and Pakistan agreed to begin talks over it, military positions on and around the glacier had already become fixed. Indian forces were in clear possession of the glacier itself and were holding the high ground in two of the three main passes leading onto the glacier through the Saltoro range. The pattern of skirmishing and artillery exchanges had also stabilised by that time, with neither side seeming anxious either to risk an all-out assault to drive the other from the glacier or to escalate the conflict beyond it. Having reached an apparent stalemate, they decided to try negotiations.<sup>28</sup>

The first round was held in Rawalpindi in January 1986, the second in New Delhi in June of the same year. Both of these meetings were confined

largely to the formal stating of positions in regard to the dispute, and very little else seems to have been accomplished.<sup>29</sup> Publicly, the two countries simply expressed their joint resolve to seek a negotiated settlement of the dispute in accordance with the spirit of the Simla agreement.

In fact, quite the opposite spirit was surfacing at the time in India–Pakistan relations. In the autumn of 1986, not long after the second round was concluded, India launched its mammoth ‘Brass Tacks’ military exercises in Rajasthan. Those exercises, the largest in India’s history, prompted Pakistan, whose forces were also engaged in autumn exercises, to order a counter-mobilisation of its own. In January 1987, when both sides massed troops and armoured formations along the Punjab border, India and Pakistan came perilously close to war. Hence, it was not until November 1987, by which time the atmosphere had improved considerably between India and Pakistan, that the decision was taken to resurrect the talks over Siachen.

After a lapse of just under two years, the third round was held in Rawalpindi in May 1988. Both sides seemed this time to take a more serious view of the negotiations. The atmosphere was more relaxed than in earlier rounds; and discussion, especially in the informal and intensive sessions that developed among some of the participants, moved away from generalities and toward specific proposals for bringing about a disengagement of military forces. According to a Pakistani participant, the Indians were told that, while India’s occupation of the Siachen was in clear violation of the Simla agreement, Pakistan recognised that compliance with Pakistan’s demand for a unilateral withdrawal of Indian forces from Siachen would be politically very difficult for India. Pakistan was willing, therefore, to spare India embarrassment by reformulating in more neutral terms its proposal for military disengagement – that is, to substitute *redeployment* of (both) forces to pre-Simla positions in place of *withdrawal* of (Indian) forces.<sup>30</sup> Notwithstanding such efforts, these talks, too, ended inconclusively with, however, a promise to meet again for a fourth round.

The fourth round had been set for New Delhi in September, Zia’s death occurred in August. That was followed by the interim government’s announcement that it would hold elections the following November to choose a new civilian leadership. These surprising developments obviously placed the Siachen negotiations in a new, and rather uncertain, political context. Pakistan moved, nevertheless, to carry on with the talks as planned. This step, according to a Pakistani delegate to the talks, was meant to ensure India’s recognition that Pakistan intended to maintain continuity in its India policy.<sup>31</sup> Once again, the

talks provided a forum for candid informal exchanges in regard to specific issues. As expected, however, this round too had few concrete results.

The fifth and final round of the Siachen talks was held nine months later, in June 1989, in Rawalpindi. This round followed Benazir Bhutto's accession to the office of Prime Minister of Pakistan. Bhutto was widely felt to be less encumbered with anti-Indian stereotypes than the older generation of Pakistani leaders. With Rajiv Gandhi, she seemed to share not only youth but a progressive view of the need for regional cooperation. These factors, along with others, stimulated some observers to suggest that the setting was more propitious for settlement than before and that a breakthrough in India–Pakistan relations was possible.<sup>32</sup> The optimism was not supported, however, by much evidence of solid progress in the four preceding rounds. On the contrary, what the Siachen talks had produced by this time was a fairly clear picture of the two sides' positions – and of the substantial gap that remained between them.

The Indian terms, as given to the author in a briefing at Indian Army Headquarters in New Delhi on 12 June 1990, were six in number.<sup>33</sup>

- (1) *cessation* of 'cartographic aggression' by Pakistan (that is, of its unilateral attempts in recent years to extend the LOC from its agreed terminus at map reference point NJ 9842 to the Karakoram pass on the border with China);<sup>34</sup>
- (2) *creation* of a demilitarised zone (DMZ) at the Siachen Glacier;
- (3) *exchange* between India and Pakistan of authenticated maps showing present military dispositions on the ground;
- (4) *delimitation* by India and Pakistan of a line from map reference point NJ 9842 northwards to the border with China 'based on ground realities';
- (5) *formulation* of ground rules to govern future military operations in the area; and, definitely 'the last step' to be taken,
- (6) *redeployment* of Indian and Pakistani forces to mutually agreed positions.

Pakistani participants confirmed to the author that these points correctly defined the position that had been formulated by the Indian delegation by the time of the fifth round. Pakistan's terms by this time, in contrast, were fewer in number. As identified for the author in several interviews with members of the Pakistani delegation to the fifth round of talks (and confirmed by Indian participants), they contained only two essential points:

- (1) *redeployment* of Indian and Pakistani forces to mutually agreed positions held at the time the cease-fire was declared in 1971 (i.e., pre-Simla positions); and only then
- (2) *delimitation* of an extension of the LOC beyond map reference point NJ 9842.

These two sets of terms appeared to be diametrically opposed. India was insisting on the primary importance of coming to agreement, first, on fixed, legitimate *boundaries* (whether of a DMZ, present military dispositions, or the actual delimitation of an extended LOC); Pakistan, on the other hand, was insisting that *military withdrawal* from the contested territory (reestablishment, in other words, of the vague territorial status quo ante) had to precede everything else. Given the circumstances each faced in the Siachen conflict, these positions were hardly unexpected. The question, of course, was whether they were at all negotiable.

The fifth round of talks, still at the Defence Secretary level, was held from 15 to 17 June 1989. Surprisingly, as this round progressed the difficulties seemed to give ground. In fact, the joint statement issued on 17 June upon the conclusion of the talks appeared, on the surface at least, to contain a major concession by the Indian side. According to press accounts, the statement said that the two delegations had discussed specific proposals aimed at an early settlement of the Siachen issue in accordance with the Simla agreement. Pakistan and India had agreed to work towards a comprehensive settlement based on redeployment of forces to reduce chances of conflict, avoidance of the use of force, and the determination of future positions on the ground so as to conform with the Simla agreement and to ensure durable peace in the Siachen area. Army authorities of the two sides were to determine future positions. It was also decided that after in-depth examination of proposals made in the fifth round, the next round of talks between the Defence Secretaries would be held at New Delhi in the near future.<sup>35</sup> The joint statement's phrasing, in particular its affirmation that the two countries sought 'a comprehensive settlement based on redeployment of forces', was interpreted by Pakistanis to mean that full military withdrawal from the Siachen had been agreed and that, in the sequence of steps envisioned in the settlement, it would have priority – precisely what the Pakistani negotiating team had been demanding all along. In *initial* media reactions to the results of the fifth round, this interpretation – or something close to it – was given wide circulation in Pakistan and even in sections of the Indian press.<sup>36</sup> Pakistanis were understandably more positive, seeing in the statement a

potentially significant shift in the Indian position and an important gain for Pakistan; but this interpretation – again, initially – was found on both sides.

Reinforcing the impression that a breakthrough agreement had been reached was the fact that, in the midst of the fifth round of talks on Siachen, Indian Foreign Secretary S. K. Singh had flown to Islamabad for separate and more comprehensive talks on India–Pakistan relations with his Pakistani counterpart Dr Humayun Khan. Mr Singh, who had been India's ambassador to Pakistan from 1985 to 1989, had a reputation for being friendly to Pakistan and for favouring reconciliation. Dr Khan, who had recently been Pakistan's envoy to India, enjoyed a similar reputation among Indians. Neither of the Foreign Secretaries had attended any of the talks at Defence Secretary level going on in Rawalpindi. On 16 June they had, however, joined the leaders of the two delegations to the Siachen talks in a roughly two-hour discussion with Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto. Also in attendance at this meeting were the Chief of the Pakistan Army Staff, General Mirza Aslam Beg, and a number of other top defence advisors to the Prime Minister. It was on this occasion, it seems, that the decision was taken to proceed with the Siachen talks on the basis of the principles contained in the joint statement announced on the following day.<sup>37</sup>

At the end of their own discussions, in the afternoon of 18 June, the two Foreign Secretaries held a joint news conference at the Islamabad airport. There is some confusion in regard to precisely what transpired at this conference. Dr Humayun Khan began by providing a review of recent bilateral talks, including the Siachen talks, between India and Pakistan. In response to a question, he expressed his understanding of the essence of the agreement reached in the Siachen negotiations. What he said, Pakistanis uniformly insist, was that both sides had agreed to withdraw their forces to positions held at the time of the Simla accord (July 1972), and that senior army officers from both countries would now meet to identify these positions.<sup>38</sup> When called upon for his reaction, Mr. S. K. Singh – whether in response to Dr Khan's general statements or to his more specific comments on the Siachen agreement is not clear – expressed his agreement with what had been said. If the Indian Foreign Secretary had any reservations about Dr Humayun Khan's comments, he did not utter them at the time.<sup>39</sup> Hardly had news reports of these developments gone out over the airways, however, when the agreement over Siachen began to unravel.

Only the next morning, in fact, the press was summoned to South Block in New Delhi to be informed by a Joint Secretary in the Ministry of

Information and Broadcasting that no agreement had been reached with Pakistan in regard to the withdrawal of forces from the disputed glacier to pre-Simla positions.<sup>40</sup> Then and in later encounters with the press, Indian spokesmen were at pains to point out that Mr S. K. Singh had not intended to endorse Dr Khan's specific observations on the Siachen talks, that the wording in the joint statement in regard to redeployment had been misinterpreted, and that the agreement's principal accomplishment, in fact, had been to get both countries to disavow the use of force as a legitimate approach to settling the issue. They emphasised that, while there had not yet been agreement on an extension of the LOC, a 'major step forward' had been the decision to show the positions of the two armies in the area. When that was done (and only then), the two countries could move to consider the problem of force redeployment. Spokesmen for the Pakistani government maintained, in reply, that the statement's wording was unambiguous, that there was a clear implication in it that the glacier would soon be vacated of Indian troops, and that only after that was done were all other matters to be sorted out.<sup>41</sup>

Pakistani officials involved in the negotiations insisted, in interviews with the author, that the fifth round had been conducted in 'real earnest', that the joint statement issued on 17 June had, in fact, been a signal achievement, and that the agreement reached had been, in the words of one senior diplomat, a 'thrilling outcome'. The Pakistani delegates were convinced, they said, on the basis of their informal discussions with their Indian counterparts that there *was* an agreement, even if informal, and that the agreement was that redeployment (simply a euphemism for withdrawal from Siachen) would occur first, delimitation afterwards. They had explained to their Indian counterparts, they said, that there was no urgent need for either India or Pakistan to mount a hasty delimitation of the LOC in the Siachen area. This area held no population, no minerals, and no strategic interest. What was urgent, the Pakistanis had argued, was clearing the Siachen Glacier of troops, a reversion, in other words, to pre-Simla conditions, leaving both sides' claims to the territory intact pending the outcome of negotiations. According to the Pakistani informants, the Indian delegation kept trying to introduce a more complicated package. They talked about a 'limited' disengagement, about a 'thinning out' of forces on the glacier. The Indians tried hard, said the Pakistanis, to get the Pakistani delegation to commit itself to practically any kind of mutually-agreed boundary in the Siachen area, at one point indicating that they would be content to do without a precise line if the Pakistanis would consent to rows of dots identifying present force positions. By the end of the talks, however, there existed – according to the Pakistanis – a clear



understanding on both sides on the order of precedence to be given redeployment, that there was 'no immediate urgency to undertake delimitation', as one Pakistani diplomat put it, 'it can take years.'<sup>42</sup> The Pakistanis insisted, furthermore, that their public statements at the time were part of a deliberate effort to make their position clear and explicit, and that Dr Humayun Khan's comments at Islamabad airport, in particular, had been fully rehearsed with (and approved by) the Indian delegation.

A senior Indian diplomat involved in the negotiations agreed that towards the end of the final round of the Siachen talks the two sides seemed on the verge of settlement. Both sides, he said, were agreed on the need to redeploy their forces and to demilitarise the glacier. Both sides were agreed, moreover, on jointly-conducted weekly or biweekly helicopter patrols of the glacier to keep the peace. The Pakistani civilians involved in the negotiations, including Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto, seemed, in the opinion of this official, to want to de-escalate the conflict and supported redeployment. So did the Pakistani Army Chief-of-Staff, General Beg. Others among the Pakistani delegation, however, in particular certain military members, took a very hard line, resisting settlement. The Indians, he insists, were *not* trying to drive a hard bargain. They wanted a settlement of the Siachen problem, he emphasised, and they did *not* insist on extending the LOC at that time. The Indians, in fact, according to this individual, did not insist on any boundaries at all in the negotiations, only on mutual withdrawal or redeployment of forces and joint policing of the glacier.<sup>43</sup>

A senior Indian military participant in the negotiations echoed his diplomatic colleague's emphasis on the crippling effect on the talks exercised by serious divisions of opinion within the Pakistani delegation. 'Their military', he said, '*wanted* a solution when Zia was still in power.' But when Benazir took power, he observed, the Pakistan Army changed its tune and now 'won't allow Benazir to get a settlement'. The Pakistan Army's insistence on mutual withdrawal of forces to pre-Simla positions, the real location of which no one really knows, he said, was a deliberate effort to scuttle the talks. Assuring the failure of the talks, in fact, was the real motivation, he insisted, behind Pakistani opposition to taking the essential initial step towards redeployment – the joint recording of *present* military deployments. This commentator insisted that confusion had marked the Pakistani side in the negotiations from the beginning, and that 'confusion compounded' had marked the fifth round. No one on the Pakistani delegation, he said, possessed complete authority to negotiate. Chaos reigned, and contradictory statements were commonplace. Pakistani

confusion made the talks difficult and 'inconvenient'. The Pakistanis, he averred, held no clear range of options, no clear brief. They constantly had to clear matters with higher-ups.<sup>44</sup>

Each side naturally attributed responsibility for the failure of the Siachen negotiations to the other. Pakistanis were as quick as the Indians to blame the other side's military for obstructing a settlement. Failure in the fifth round, said a Pakistani member of the negotiating team, was basically the result of disagreement between the Indian Army and the civil government. The civil government, he argued, was more inclined to negotiate; the military – which was in a position to embarrass the central government if it did not get its way – was less inclined. It was not, he emphasised, India's imminent elections or domestic political opposition to the redeployment idea that explained Indian resistance to a settlement. Indeed, to accommodate the Indians in this regard, he explained, the Pakistanis had offered to delay implementing redeployment until after the elections were over. 'We were cheated of the settlement,' said he.

The Siachen negotiations, in fact, continued for another two months following the altercations in June. Pursuant to the June agreement, military commanders' talks on Siachen were held in New Delhi on 9–10 July. A week later, Prime Ministers Rajiv Gandhi and Benazir Bhutto met for a summit conference in Islamabad. There they approved the results of the fifth round of talks and directed their Defence Secretaries to continue working towards an agreement based on the principles expressed in the June joint statement. In the latter part of August, military commanders of the two sides met for yet another round of talks in Rawalpindi. Hovering over all of these meetings, however, was the common realisation that the talks had reached a stalemate and that there remained very little likelihood of a breakthrough. After the August meetings, the talks were suspended.

## THE LIMITS OF BILATERALISM

Two days before the fifth round of the Siachen negotiations was scheduled to begin, a remarkable article about the Siachen dispute appeared in the *Times of India*. Authored by retired Lieutenant General M. L. Chibber, who had headed the Indian Army's huge Northern Command when it launched the Siachen operation in April 1984, the article made an appeal for a compromise solution to the Siachen dispute. In contrast with the overwhelming bulk of publicly-expressed views on the subject in India at the time, Chibber's article described the dispute as 'a very minor issue between countries of the size, importance and maturity of India and

Pakistan. It should be relegated to the level where it belongs. The senior military commanders of India and Pakistan in Jammu and Kashmir should be directed to settle the issue once and for all.' He conceded that there were strong feelings in India against compromise and that, particularly among those in the military who had fought to take and hold the glacier, this was readily understandable. '[W]e must learn to rise above such sentiments,' he insisted, however, 'for the sake of long-term interests of the people of India and Pakistan.'<sup>45</sup>

Viewed in isolation from the rest of India–Pakistan relations, the Siachen dispute did, indeed, seem to hold some potential for resolution. Military commanders on neither side considered the glacier to have much military or strategic value.<sup>46</sup> It seemed to be a military cul-de-sac, with the fighting having long since settled into stalemate. The costs – human and material – of maintaining large forces at such elevations were very large. The Siachen negotiations themselves had survived four rounds spread over several years – not a bad record in the South Asian environment.

The trouble, of course, was that the Siachen dispute could not be dealt with in isolation. Like virtually all other issues between India and Pakistan, it had to be dealt with in the broader geopolitical context, as merely one element, in other words, in a whole constellation of problems that had bedevilled their relationship over the years.

The Siachen dispute was tied most closely, of course, to the territorial dispute over Kashmir. Inevitably, the central focus of that dispute was a boundary question – the rightfulness of the boundary, its location, naming, physical demarcation, policing, and permanence. From the beginning, Pakistan, the loser in Kashmir and hence the revisionist actor, had generally articulated a 'counter-boundary' policy in Kashmir, one that emphasised the transience of the CFL – the conditional character, in other words, of its legal standing pending the outcome of a plebiscite in Jammu and Kashmir.<sup>47</sup> For Pakistan, Kashmir was preeminently *disputed* territory, and was so designated on all Pakistani maps. Pakistan's Kashmir policy had also emphasised international participation (through peace-keeping, as well as through endorsement and supervision of the proposed plebiscite in accord with UN resolutions at the time of the cease-fire in 1949) in deciding the future of the disputed territory. The renegotiation of the CFL, in 1972, was thus a definite setback for Pakistan. The redesignated LOC, as noted above, severely crippled UNMOGIP – the physical symbol of international responsibility in Kashmir. Ever since 1972, UNMOGIP had been barred from inspecting the Indian side of the line, leaving it with but one leg to perform its peacekeeping function. Even worse from Pakistan's perspective was the fact that the redrawn line was

the product of a *bilateral* pact based explicitly on the principle of physical (meaning military) *control*, a combination that seemed to give the advantage to present regional might over past international right.

India, on the other hand, the winner in Kashmir and thus the status quo actor, after some initial ambivalence, had moved to implement a 'pro-boundary' policy, one that emphasised the finality of Kashmir's accession to India and the desirability of fixing boundaries in recognition of that immutable fact. For India, Kashmir was not disputed but *aggressed upon* territory. Though it was India that had initially brought the Kashmir issue to the attention of the UN Security Council in 1948, the preferability of a regional settlement based on 'present realities' had long since taken precedence over internationally-mediated solutions.

The 'invasion' of the Siachen negotiations by these rival perspectives on the boundary question in Kashmir simply could not be prevented. The Siachen problem had arisen in the first place because of the *absence* of a boundary beyond map coordinate NJ 9842. Pakistanis, on the one hand, naturally sought to avoid yet another setback to their customary boundary policy on Kashmir by refusing to be drawn into *any* sort of boundary-lining on the glacier that would appear to yield ground to the principal of present control – that is, to India's superior military might. Hence, Pakistan's refusal to agree to what Indians insisted was no more than an essential preliminary step towards redeployment – the common registry, even by dots, of present force positions on the ground at Siachen. Hence, also, its demand for a boundary extension at Siachen that ran northeastwards from map coordinate NJ 9842 to the Karakoram pass. This line, in sharp contrast to what the Indians were proposing, had nothing at all to do with military control. On the contrary, it depended for its validity on the legality of the border agreement negotiated between China and Pakistan in 1963, on the sanction given it in a number of international atlases, and on the practice of international mountaineering groups in seeking authorisation for climbing and trekking expeditions to the Siachen area from Pakistan rather than from India.<sup>48</sup>

Indians, on the other hand, could see very little to be gained from simple vacation of the glacier, both because their own ageing demand for the 'vacation of Pakistan's aggression' in Kashmir had never been honoured and because Siachen seemed to them a dangerous gap in the LOC and a natural spot at which to force another step towards hardened boundaries in Kashmir. Hence, the insistence by Indians that delimitation of boundaries be given precedence over redeployment and that due recognition be given to 'ground realities' – meaning Indian military control of the glacier.<sup>49</sup> Hence, also, the argument that the

Indian claim line to the west of the glacier had, in any event, been there all along.<sup>50</sup>

While the Siachen negotiations may not yet have run their full course, the experience with them that India and Pakistan have had thus far is hardly cause for high expectations in regard to bilateral negotiations over Kashmir. There is obviously much more at stake in Kashmir – and the issues there are considerably more complex – than could be imagined for the Siachen Glacier. Under the best of circumstances, Kashmir would be a very tough nut to crack. The record of direct negotiations over Kashmir that we reviewed earlier in this chapter clearly testifies to that. Unfortunately, circumstances in the subcontinent at the end of 1990 appear to be even less congenial to a negotiated solution of the Kashmir dispute than they were when those talks occurred in the 1950s and 1960s.

One comes to this unhappy conclusion not because there is a lack of proposals to settle the problem, or a shortage in the region of goodwilled individuals to make them. On the contrary, in both India and Pakistan one finds numerous individuals with creative, even courageous, ideas on the subject. The same General Chibber who called, in written articles, for compromise over Siachen has taken a bold and public stand for reconciliation between India and Pakistan. One day following his retirement in 1985 from the Indian Army, he wrote to Pakistani President Zia ul-Haq proposing a visit to Pakistan to lay the groundwork for reconciliation. Zia's reply was positive; for a number of reasons, however, the visit never took place. Instead, General Chibber, who had clearly risked his reputation among his fellow generals, was subjected to the puzzled scrutiny of the intelligence agencies of both India and Pakistan.<sup>51</sup> The head of a well-known research organisation in New Delhi told the author, in the summer of 1990, that he favoured a solution for Kashmir along the lines of the Lithuanian model. India, he said, required a new and much more decentralised mode of governance. 'I favour a loose confederation of *all* of India's states,' he explained, 'in effect, the extension of Article 370 [of the Indian Constitution] to cover all the states of India.'<sup>52</sup> The Kashmiris, he observed, should be encouraged to find a remedy themselves to the present crisis. In this way, he suggested, India could 'negotiate a graceful exit from Kashmir rather than a bitter one'. Similarly provocative suggestions were made by a prominent Indian journalist. In the midst of the most violent separatist agitation in Kashmir since 1947, and in the face of a barrage of accusations that Pakistan was engaged in flagrant interference in Indian Kashmir, he could still summon New Delhi to act unilaterally ('once the dust settles') to open traditional routes across

the LOC, and to take such other steps as would lead eventually to a 'soft frontier' between the two parts of Kashmir.<sup>53</sup>

An axiom of Pakistani politics is that a more powerful consensus exists in regard to the rightfulness of the Pakistani claim to Kashmir than on practically any other issue. Yet, even in Pakistan, where compromise on Kashmir may seem to many like heresy, voices calling for a carefully reasoned and practical approach to Kashmir were far from uncommon even as the Kashmir crisis came to a boil in India-Pakistan relations during the winter of 1989-90. The officer corps of the Pakistan Army was itself a source of some of these sentiments. A brigade commander, for instance, with responsibility for a broad sector of the Kashmir border, stated flatly to the author, in October 1989, that Pakistan's demand for a plebiscite in Kashmir was not a realistic option and that the LOC ought to be converted into a permanent international frontier.<sup>54</sup> In March 1990, the editor of Pakistan's premier defence journal (himself a retired army brigadier) wrote in a cover article that 'We in Pakistan cannot be too cautious and realistic in our appreciation of the [Kashmir] situation.' Even if the Kashmiri resistance represented a major leap forward, he advised, Pakistanis 'would rather keep the Kashmir insurgency under very close and critical watch than beguile ourselves into over-optimistic assumptions. Whether [the uprising in Kashmir] is the "chance of the century" or of a life-time, time alone would show; and we do not have to rush things faster than objective reality would permit us to.' Pakistan should allow 'the Kashmiris to fight their own battles as far as possible without any direct interference. The *Gibraltar* episode must never be repeated to help a people not appreciative or supportive of such measures. ...For the time being, let the Kashmiris fight their own battles and let their resistance blossom further into a fight-to-a-finish by the Kashmiris *of* the Kashmiris and *for* the Kashmiris.'<sup>55</sup>

As encouraging as it may be to find dissenting voices like these, nothing could be clearer than that these do not represent the great bulk of policy-relevant opinion in the subcontinent. This is equally the case, moreover, whether one is in India or in Pakistan, and whether one is speaking in the past or the present tense. Claims to the contrary by leading Indian scholars are, in fact, extremely suspect. True, Pakistan's chronic instability, as the Indian historian Sisir Gupta observed, has always been a severe constraint on its leaders' efforts to reach compromise on Kashmir.<sup>56</sup> No doubt, either, that the media of mass communication in Pakistan have 'built up an image of the Kashmir problem in the public mind which ignores entirely both its complexities and the many weaknesses in the Pakistani stand'.<sup>57</sup> But the problem of

elite intransigence in regard to Kashmir was never confined solely to Pakistan.

As in Pakistan, there have always been in India sizeable coteries of influential people strongly motivated to thwart any move in the direction of compromise over Kashmir. North Indians, in general, suggested one leading Delhi intellectual to the author, are culturally inclined to think the worst about Pakistanis.<sup>58</sup> 'Most expressions of *total* disgust with them, however, came', he said, 'from two kinds of Indians'. The first were migrants from Pakistan. These people, he said, were often educated in pre-partition Pakistan; they were fond of Islamic culture, its Urdu language and poetry. 'But they would never take Pakistan at face value,' he pointed out, and 'they are always suspicious of Pakistani motives.' Punjabis as a whole, he suggested, reflect this thinking.

The second kind he identified as a 'new all-India caste', an amalgam of displaced social groups (including Kashmiri Pandits and Tamil Brahmins) that has wielded considerable power and influence in the post-1947 period. They are inclined to the ideological left, he suggested, and their dislike of Pakistan is coupled with anti-Americanism. For this kind of Indian, he said, 'Pakistan must prove itself by 500 per cent, India by only 1 per cent.' Representatives of these two kinds of Indians, he noted, are especially prominent in the Foreign Office. They also dominate the media. Together, he argued, they largely dominate public discussion of foreign affairs. Their views, moreover, are fused with Indian nationalism, making it difficult to challenge them. No less than in Pakistan, in any event, the 'attitudinal prisms' of Indian policymaking elites have long acted as prisons of foreign policy decision-making on Kashmir.<sup>59</sup>

Even if dissent were picking up momentum on both sides of the border, however, scepticism in regard to the will and capacity of these two countries to resolve the Kashmir dispute peacefully would still be warranted. There are two main reasons for this, one having to do with present internal, the other with present external, political circumstances in the region.

In 1990, internal circumstances in India and Pakistan, from practically any point of view, are profoundly incompatible with the serious negotiation of differences between them over Kashmir. Both governments, in fact, for the past year or more have been dangerously undermined by fierce political infighting, not to mention widespread regional and communal disorders. After 20 months of near paralysis, the government of Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto was finally dismissed from power on 6 August. Practically all observers described her government as weak and indecisive, subject to the army's veto, and singularly incapable of moving

effectively against the lawlessness that had gripped the Sindh province in particular.<sup>60</sup> By and large, the Bhutto government had had little energy to spare for foreign affairs. Moreover the enthusiasm for promoting relations with India, of which it had given conspicuous display immediately after taking power, had been replaced as its hold on power began loosening, in the spring of 1990, by at least equal enthusiasm for demoting them. Benazir never seemed wholly in control of her government, a factor which may well have given New Delhi second thoughts about making concessions to her.<sup>61</sup> Her party's resounding defeat in the October elections, and the naming on 6 November 1990 of Nawaz Sharif to head a majority government in Islamabad, may restore some stability to the country. But since the new ruling coalition (the Islamic Democratic Alliance) included influential Islamist elements, and since it had made allegations of Benazir's 'softness' towards India one of the centrepieces of its opposition to her, there was practically no chance that it would give reconciliation with India high priority, at least in the immediate future.

Domestic political developments in India were hardly more promising. The country seemed mired in chaos and increasingly widespread violence; and observers offered grim speculation on the demise of democracy.<sup>62</sup> After 11 months of unprecedented turmoil, the minority government of Prime Minister V. P. Singh was removed from office on 7 November by a parliamentary vote of no-confidence – the first time that had happened in India since independence. Singh's erstwhile political ally, Chandra Shekhar, was installed as India's eighth Prime Minister on 9 November. Since he controlled even fewer seats in the Lok Sabha than had his predecessor, chances for the survival of his government – or for the return of stability to India's national politics – were extremely slight.<sup>63</sup> Obviously, political instability at the centre was clearly no longer solely a Pakistani problem.

India's current political malaise was not limited, however, to the indecorous recirculation of elites going on in New Delhi. More directly consequential for India-Pakistan relations, in fact, were the direct challenges to the integrity of the Indian state embodied in Punjabi Sikh and Kashmiri Muslim separatism, on the one hand, and the apparent political strength of Hindu fundamentalism, exhibited in the recent crisis over the building of a Hindu temple on the site of a sixteenth-century mosque in the city of Ayodhya, on the other. Not since the partition riots at the time of independence had militant movements of such size and mass appeal made their appearance simultaneously among these three religious communities. Admittedly, neither the inspiration behind these movements nor the issues at stake in them were limited to religious identity. In the political upheaval in the state of Jammu and Kashmir, for example,



independence-seeking Kashmiri nationalists vied with pro-Pakistan Islamist elements for control of the liberation movement. Pervasive among Indians, however, was the conviction that none of these movements would yield to easy palliatives, and that in all of them Pakistan played an active role. In regard to the latter, nothing provoked a more negative reaction among Indians than Pakistan's interference in Kashmir.

It was not that Indians were especially apprehensive about the actual physical loss of Kashmir. A deliberate decision by Islamabad to go to war over Kashmir seemed very unlikely. And India's ability to crush the secessionists, or at least to thwart them from achieving their objectives, seemed insurmountable. The problem was that in Kashmir, more perhaps than in any other state of the Indian Union, democracy and secularism seemed to have failed badly; and their failure, in a state where the people's right to self-determination remained still on the agenda of the United Nations, could become at any moment a major international embarrassment. After all, India's conversion of the collapse of Islamabad's authority in Bangladesh in 1971 into a propaganda weapon against Pakistan had been, in the words of two American writers, 'spectacularly successful'.<sup>64</sup> In much the same way, Pakistan was able now to turn a critical spotlight on the potentially irremediable defects of Indian nationhood itself.

With domestic politics on both sides of the border in something of shambles, the prospects for direct bilateral negotiations over Kashmir thus seemed, at the start of the 1990s, even more than usually dependent on inspiration from abroad. The situation certainly looked promising in this regard. As we observed at the beginning of this essay, the end of the Cold war had all but eliminated the threat of a superpower military confrontation in the South Asian region; moreover, it had raised the possibility for concerted efforts by Washington and Moscow to inch their South Asian clients towards a form of regional detente paralleling their own at the global level. Unfortunately, the new decade appeared at the same time to be ushering in quite as many uncertainties as reassurances in regard to regional security. The region's external political circumstances in 1990 seemed, in fact, no more likely than its internal circumstances to stimulate much progress in the direction of a negotiated solution of Kashmir.

The problem, in a nutshell, was that the apparent end of the Cold War seemed bound to dilute, if not to destroy, the grounds for the alliances upon which the South Asian 'security complex' had come to depend.<sup>65</sup> These alliances had obviously served both regional and global objectives; and it was only natural, once the latter began to fade, that the remaining interests of the superpowers in the former would be subject to intense examination. While there had always been strong doubts in India and

Pakistan about the longterm reliability to their alliance partners, these had never been more justified than they were now. The alignment of the Soviet Union and India on one side of the power equation, and of China, Pakistan and the United States on the other, clearly depended to a very large extent on the fundamental East–West cleavage.<sup>66</sup> This cleavage, which underlay practically all of the security compacts forged on the Eurasian landmass in the period after the Second World War, was now being rapidly obliterated. Indeed, many of the compacts it stimulated presently seem superfluous. What would eventually replace these products of Cold War rivalry was unknown. What impact their decline would have on the security of South Asia was also unknown. What was known, however, was that the Cold War could no longer be used by either India or Pakistan to produce desired military or diplomatic reflexes in their superpower patrons. The abrupt suspension of US security assistance to Pakistan, on 1 October 1990, was one possible sign of this.<sup>67</sup> Indications in Moscow that its silent observation of India's progress towards owning nuclear weapons could no longer be taken for granted was another.<sup>68</sup> While these alliance systems seemed in no immediate danger of complete disruption, the unease that attended their inevitable reevaluation in all the effected capitals seemed likely to induce an at least temporary hiatus in regard to negotiating in any issue as fundamental as Kashmir.

## CONCLUSION

The Kashmir dispute remains in 1990 what it has been since independence was gained in 1947, a source of dangerous provocation and a major obstacle to the reconciliation of India and Pakistan. Seemingly, both countries would benefit in a multitude of ways – reduced defence costs only one of them – from its settlement. Exploring mechanisms of conflict-resolution suited to the region would thus appear to deserve high priority. Scholars have certainly produced a multitude of proposals to aid in this work.<sup>69</sup>

The argument in this chapter has been that, for the foreseeable future, resolution of the Kashmir dispute through direct bilateral negotiations between India and Pakistan must be considered highly unlikely. Indeed, even getting the subject of Kashmir on to the agenda of negotiations between them cannot be said to have great promise. This is bound to be disappointing to the region's wellwishers, many of whom routinely appeal to India and Pakistan to resolve their differences 'in the spirit of the Simla agreement'<sup>70</sup> – an agreement, we may recall, that explicitly endorsed the

principle of bilateralism. We have observed in this chapter, however, that the Simla pact's endorsement was quite ambiguous and that, in any event, its presumed spirit was quickly shelved. Given the context in which the pact was drawn up, its invocation by outsiders inevitably resonates very differently in Pakistan and India, while seeming disingenuous in both. Increasingly, in fact, Simla doesn't seem to mean much in either of them.<sup>71</sup>

Since the bilateral route seems blocked, at least for some time, where then can one turn? Multilateral or third-party mediation is one possibility. Unfortunately, in regard specifically to the Kashmir dispute mediation has very little to boast of since the termination of the UNCIP mission in 1950; and all efforts since then to revive it as an instrument for settling the Kashmir dispute have served mainly to aggravate the matter.<sup>72</sup> India has formally ruled it out since 1972; and neither side, frankly, would be likely to embrace it without ironclad guarantees that existing positions would not be seriously challenged. International mediation does have an established record in regional affairs, not all of it unsuccessful; and, in the post-Cold War atmosphere of the day, it might stand a chance of being perceived as a more neutral mechanism of dispute-settlement than was the case in previous decades. Identifying a 'common friend' has always been a major headache in the subcontinent, however; and the suitability for this role of the United Nations, in particular, remains highly problematic. While its reputation for evenhanded regional problem-solving may be on the rise in other of the world's trouble spots, this is decidedly not the case in India-Pakistan relations.<sup>73</sup>

There is very little reason to believe that the United States, freed of the problem of Soviet military occupation of Afghanistan, will now make a strong bid to resolve the Kashmir dispute. Washington, in fact, has never had sufficient incentive or patience to make a serious attempt to bring South Asian rivals to an agreement over Kashmir. On the contrary, other foreign policy aims – at times, containing the Soviet Union, at other times, containing the spread of nuclear weapons – have regularly diverted it. Washington presently has its hands full with the Gulf crisis. In mid-May 1990, President Bush dispatched a special envoy to Islamabad and New Delhi for urgent consultations over the developing Kashmir crisis. But it was evident that the objectives of that mission, as well as of the Bush administration's numerous other diplomatic exertions, fell considerably short of resolving it.<sup>74</sup> American interest in managing the security of the subcontinent has always been essentially derivative of other objectives, and thus limited and transient. Realistically, one could not expect it to suspend aid to Pakistan on behalf of nonproliferation and, in the same breath, to encourage confidence-building measures in its relations with

India. Forcing a settlement of the Kashmir dispute was hardly practical. Since Washington was generally perceived in South Asia as both indifferent and unreliable, mediating it was equally impractical. For its part, the Soviet Union – faced with unprecedented internal strains – seemed in no condition to lead the way towards reconciliation in South Asia.<sup>75</sup>

It has not been the argument of this chapter that the door ought to be shut on any single approach to conflict-resolution in South Asia. On the contrary, none of the alternative measures that have been introduced into the debate over Kashmir in the past – not even the acutely controversial and, in practical terms, virtually moot proposal for the conduct of an internationally-supervised plebiscite among Kashmiris – should be excluded from consideration.<sup>76</sup> These are extraordinary times, both in so far as changes in the global configuration of power are concerned and in the subcontinent's own political evolution; and the ability to anticipate the progress of the Kashmir dispute, or to know in advance with what tools of statecraft it must be dealt with, is perhaps even less than usual. Nevertheless, the great likelihood is that, for the indefinite future, India and Pakistan will have to cope with the Kashmir dispute essentially on their own and in terms less pretentious than conflict-resolution.

Managing the Kashmir dispute – not resolving it – is, of course, what India and Pakistan have been doing all along. They have managed it in the main by confronting one another with the threat of unacceptable military losses in the event of an attack across the LOC. They have managed it, too, by raising or lowering the amount of political manipulation, infiltration and subversion they support on the adversary's side of the LOC. Both have resorted to heavy propaganda attacks on the other, when such endeavours promised to pay dividends in international opinion. On the more positive side, they have taken a variety of steps to avoid accidental war by improving communications between the two military commands. Quietly, but often, they have met to curb provocations that threatened to turn minor incidents along the disputed border into major outbreak of violence. As in the Siachen fighting, they have shown a pronounced inclination, when at war, to avoid taking steps that would widen the rift irretrievably.<sup>77</sup>

It may well be that these measures, and others like them, are no longer adequate to manage the Kashmir dispute. The aim of this chapter has been to suggest that whatever deficiency presently exists in the management of that dispute, it is far better corrected by focusing on the modification or augmentation of measures such as these than by pinning extravagant hopes

on the search for a final settlement. This approach will require more imagination from Indian and Pakistani leaders than we have seen recently. If the analysis here has not been too wide of the mark, we may hope that they will rise to the occasion.

APPENDIX I: CHRONOLOGICAL LISTING OF MAJOR BILATERAL NEGOTIATIONS, INTERNATIONAL PEACEKEEPING AND MEDIATION EFFORTS RELATING TO INDIA–PAKISTAN DISPUTES OVER KASHMIR AND SIACHEN GLACIER, 1947–PRESENT

UNITED NATIONS MEDIATION: KASHMIR

**A. UN Commission on India and Pakistan (UNCIP), 1948–50**

- 1 Jan. 1948 Letter of Indian Representative to President of UN Security Council. Security Council action to restore peace in Kashmir requested.
- 20 Jan. 1948 Security Council resolution S/654. UN Commission on India and Pakistan (UNCIP) established. Indian and Pakistani representatives to UN agreed, in talks held under President of Security Council, to appointment of a three-member Commission of Mediation to go to Kashmir to investigate facts and exercise a mediatory influence. Plebiscite and other issues not specified.
- 21 Apr. 1948 Security Council resolution S/726. UNCIP expanded to five members. Immediate departure for subcontinent to restore peace and arrange for plebiscite authorised. Establishment of UN observers in Kashmir authorised.
- 7 Jul. 1948 Arrival in subcontinent of expanded UNCIP.
- 13 Aug. 1948 UNCIP cease-fire and truce agreement. Cease-fire ordered by India and Pakistan, to take effect 1 January 1949. Plebiscite affirmed.
- 1 Jan. 1949 Cease-fire implemented.

- 5 Jan. 1949      UNCIP resolution on demilitarisation. Plebiscite reaffirmed. Rejected by India.
- 28 Apr. 1949      UNCIP submission of new truce proposals to India and Pakistan. Rejected by both India and Pakistan.
- Apr. 1949      Appointment of Fleet Admiral Chester W. Nimitz as Plebiscite Administrator by UN Secretary General.
- 27 Jul. 1949      Agreement between military representatives of India and Pakistan regarding the establishment of a cease-fire line in the State of Jammu and Kashmir [Karachi Agreement]. UN military observers authorised. Agreement followed joint military meetings in Karachi under Truce Subcommittee of UNCIP, 18–27 July.
- 26 Aug. 1949      UNCIP submission of arbitration proposal to India and Pakistan. Rejected by both India and Pakistan.
- 22 Dec. 1949      Proposals on demilitarisation and plebiscite submitted by General A. G. L. McNaughton, President of the Security Council, to India and Pakistan. No agreement reached.
- 14 Mar. 1950      Security Council replacement of UNCIP with a UN Representative.

## **B. UN Representative, 1950–8**

- 12 Apr. 1950      Security Council appointment of Sir Owen Dixon as UN Representative for India and Pakistan.
- 15 Sep. 1950      Report of the UN Representative for India and Pakistan, Sir Owen Dixon, to the Security Council. No progress reported in mediation efforts. Partition and partial plebiscite recommended.
- Apr. 1951      Security Council appointment of Dr Frank P. Graham as UN Representative for India and Pakistan.
- Dec. 1951–Feb. 53      Revised draft proposals on demilitarisation submitted by Dr. Frank P. Graham, UN Representative for India and Pakistan, to India and Pakistan. Agreement on certain key proposals not reached.

- 21 Feb. 1957 Security Council authorisation of Mr Gunnar Jarring, President of the Security Council, to hold talks with India and Pakistan in regard to proposals on demilitarisation and plebiscite.
- 29 Apr. 1957 Report of the President of the Security Council, Mr Gunnar Jarring, to the Security Council. Proposal to arbitrate dispute rejected by India.
- 2 Dec. 1957 Security Council authorisation of Dr Frank P. Graham, UN Representative for India and Pakistan, to renew mediation efforts.
- 28 Mar. 1958 Report of Dr Frank P. Graham, UN Representative for India and Pakistan, to the Security Council. Proposals, including proposal to arbitrate dispute, rejected by India.

### THIRD-PARTY MEDIATION: KASHMIR

- 10 Jan. 1966 Tashkent Declaration. Agreement between India and Pakistan on cease-fire and restoration of peaceful relations, reached following mediation by Soviet Union, 3–10 January.

### UNITED NATIONS PEACEKEEPING: KASHMIR

- 24 Jan. 1949 First UN military observers arrived in subcontinent to supervise cease-fire.
- 27 Jul. 1949 Karachi Agreement. UN Military Observer Group in India and Pakistan (UNMOGIP) authorised.
- 5 Aug. 1965 Infiltration across CFL into Indian Kashmir by Pakistani irregular forces. Rapid breakdown of cease-fire.
- 1 Sep. 1965 Outbreak of second Indo-Pakistan war. Attack across CFL into Jammu by Pakistani regular armed forces.
- 4 Sep. 1965 Security Council resolution S/6661. Immediate cease-fire, respect for cease-fire line, and full cooperation with UNMOGIP called for.
- 6 Sep. 1965 Attack on Pakistan across international border by Indian armed forces.

- 6 Sep. 1965 Security Council resolution S/Res/210(1965). Immediate cease-fire and prompt withdrawal of all armed personnel to positions held before 5 August called for. Strengthening of UNMOGIP by Secretary General requested.
- 20 Sep. 1965 Security Council resolution S/Res/211(1965). Cease-fire deadline of 22 September and subsequent withdrawal of all armed personnel to positions held before 5 August demanded.
- 23 Sep. 1965 Establishment of UN India–Pakistan Observation Mission (UNIPOM) by Secretary General. Supervision of cease-fire and withdrawal of armed personnel on international frontier outside of Kashmir mandated. UNMOGIP responsibility confined to CFL in Kashmir.
- 1 Mar. 1966 UNIPOM functions terminated and the organisation dissolved.
- 3 Dec. 1971 Spread of third Indo-Pakistan war to western border. Pakistani air strikes against Indian targets in western sector, including Srinagar, followed by Indian retaliatory attacks along international border and CFL.
- 8 Dec. 1971 General Assembly resolution. Immediate cease-fire and withdrawal of all forces by both sides from one another's territory called for.
- 16 Dec. 1971 Fall of Dacca and surrender of Pakistani forces in East Pakistan.
- 17 Dec. 1971 Unilateral Indian declaration of cease-fire in West Pakistan, acceptance by Pakistan, and end of fighting.
- 21 Dec. 1971 Security Council resolution S/307. Withdrawal of all forces by both sides from one another's territory, including Kashmir, called for.
- 19 Feb. 1972 Indian announcement to United Nations of willingness to negotiate settlement with Pakistan without preconditions.
- 3 Jul. 1972 Simla Agreement. New Line of Control (LOC) established in Jammu and Kashmir, and commitment made to bilateral negotiation of disputes. Peacekeeping function of UNMOGIP tacitly diminished.



DIRECT BILATERAL NEGOTIATIONS: KASHMIR

- 30 Oct–Dec. 1947 Meetings between representatives of India and Pakistan over Kashmir. Lahore and New Delhi. Auspices of Joint [Inter-Dominion] Defence Council. No agreement reached. Abandoned in favour of UN intercession.
- 25–7 Jul. 1953 Meetings between Prime Ministers of India and Pakistan. Karachi. Preliminary discussions, including Kashmir.
- 17–20 Aug. 1953 Meetings between Prime Ministers of India and Pakistan. New Delhi. Expert committees to deal with specific issues proposed, plebiscite to ascertain the wishes of the Kashmiri people endorsed, and deadline for appointment of Plebiscite Administrator by end of April 1954 agreed. [Subsequent correspondence in regard to Kashmir between the Prime Ministers of India and Pakistan, 27 August, 1953 – 21 September, 1954, resulted in no agreement.]
- 14–18 May 1955 Meetings between Prime Ministers of India and Pakistan on Kashmir. New Delhi. No agreement reached. Continuation of talks called for.
- 19–23 Sep. 1960 Meetings between Prime Ministers of India and Pakistan. Karachi. Indus Waters Treaty signed. Major issues in Indo-Pakistan relations, including Kashmir, considered. No progress reported on Kashmir.
- 27–9 Dec. 1962 Ministerial talks on Kashmir. First round. Rawalpindi.
- 16–19 Jan. 1963 Ministerial talks on Kashmir. Second round. New Delhi.
- 8–10 Feb. 1963 Ministerial talks on Kashmir. Third round. Karachi.
- 12–14 Mar. 1963 Ministerial talks on Kashmir. Fourth round. Calcutta.
- 21–5 Apr. 1963 Ministerial talks on Kashmir. Fifth round. Karachi.
- 14–16 May 1963 Ministerial talks on Kashmir. Sixth round. New Delhi. Joint communique ending talks reported no agreement reached on settlement of Kashmir dispute.

- 1–2 Mar. 1966      Post-Tashkent meeting between Indian and Pakistani Foreign Ministers. Rawalpindi. Terminated upon failure to agree on inclusion of Kashmir on formal agenda.
- 28 Jun.–2 Jul. 1972      Simla peace talks between Prime Ministers of India and Pakistan. Kashmir excluded from formal agenda. New Line of Control (LOC ) established in Jammu and Kashmir. Formal commitment made to final settlement of Jammu and Kashmir.

#### DIRECT BILATERAL NEGOTIATIONS: SIACHEN

- 17 Dec. 1985      Meeting between Prime Minister of India and President of Pakistan. New Delhi. Agreement reached to hold talks at Defence Secretary level on Siachen issue.
- 10–12 Jan. 1986      Defence Secretary talks on Siachen. First round. Rawalpindi. Resolved to seek negotiated settlement in accordance with spirit of Simla agreement.
- 10–12 Jun. 1986      Defence Secretary talks on Siachen. Second round. New Delhi.
- 4 Nov. 1987      Meeting of Indian and Pakistani Prime Ministers at conference of South Asian Association of Regional Cooperation ( SAARC ) in Kathmandu. Agreement to revive suspended meetings of Defence Secretaries on Siachen issue.
- 19–20 May. 1988      Defence Secretary talks on Siachen. Third round. Islamabad.
- 23–24 Sep. 1988      Defence Secretary talks on Siachen. Fourth round. New Delhi.
- 15–17 Jun. 1989      Defence Secretary talks on Siachen. Fifth round. Rawalpindi. Agreement reached to work towards a comprehensive settlement of the Siachen issue based on redeployment of forces. Army authorities would determine further positions of forces on the ground. Next round to be held in New Delhi following in-depth examination of specific proposals.

- 16–18 Jun. 1989 Foreign Secretary (collateral) talks on Siachen. Islamabad. Pakistani Foreign Secretary reported in Pakistani press to have declared fifth round agreement on withdrawal of forces from Siachen. Report subsequently denied by India.
- 9–10 Jul. 1989 Military commanders talks on Siachen. New Delhi.
- 16–17 Jul. 1989 Meeting between Prime Ministers of India and Pakistan. Islamabad. Results of fifth round of Defence Secretary talks approved. Defence Secretaries directed to work towards a comprehensive settlement in accordance with Simla agreement and based on redeployment of forces. Military authorities directed to continue discussions to determine future positions on the ground to which redeployment would take place.
- 18–20 Aug. 1989 Military commanders talks on Siachen. Rawalpindi.

## NOTES

1. The author wishes to thank the United States Institute for Peace for a generous grant enabling research on the topic of this chapter. The views expressed in the chapter are, of course, those of the author alone.
2. Richard N. Haass, *Conflicts Unending: The United States and Regional Disputes* (Hew Haven: Yale University Press, 1990) pp. 6–8. Haass, a lecturer in public policy at Harvard University's John F. Kennedy School of Government when he wrote the book, was appointed in January 1989 as special assistant to President Bush and the senior director for Near East and South Asian affairs on the staff of the National Security Council.
3. *Ibid.*, pp. 86–7.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 87. According to Haass, 'ripeness' for settlement has four prerequisites: (1) a shared perception of the desirability of an accord; (2) the ability of political leaders, whether by virtue of their strength or their weakness, to reach compromise; (3) the existence of a compromise formula politically acceptable to both sides; and (4) the availability of a mutually acceptable conflict-resolving approach or process (pp. 27–9).
5. The Line of Control agreed to in the 1972 Simla Agreement replaced the Cease-Fire Line that had been established pursuant of the Karachi Agreement of 27 July, 1949.
6. 'India Sends Soldiers to the Pakistani Border', *New York Times*, 22 August, 1990, p. A5.
7. For an Indian view of both the overt and the covert sides of Pakistan's involvement in the Kashmir crisis, see Shekhar Gupta, 'Benazir Bhutto: Playing with Fire', *India Today* (New Delhi), 31 May 1990, pp. 22–9.

8. For a sampling of Indian viewpoints on the Kashmir crisis, see *ibid.*; Tapan Bose *et al.*, 'India's "Kashmir War"', *Economic and Political Weekly* (Bombay), 31 March 1990, pp. 650–62; Inderjit Badhwar, 'Kashmir: Perilous Turn', *India Today* (International Edition), 30 April, 1990, pp. 10–16; K. Subrahmanyam, 'Kashmir', *Strategic Analysis* (New Delhi), 13:2 (May 1990) pp. 111–98; Samuel Baid, 'Self-Determination for Kashmiris: A Camouflage for Pak's Own Claim', *Strategic Analysis*, 13:3 (June 1990) pp. 327–55; Anand Sahay, 'Kashmir's Dilemma', *Frontline* (New Delhi), 7:12 (9–22 June 1990) pp. 4–11; B.G. Verghese, 'Kashmir: Way To Recovery', *Mainstream* (New Delhi), 5 May, 1990; Prem Shankar Jha, 'Frustrated Middle Class: Roots of Kashmir's Alienation', *Times of India* (New Delhi), 28 May 1990; and K. S. Bajpai, 'Kashmir: A Question of Nationhood', *Hindustan Times* (New Delhi), 28 June 1990. Following a week's visit to Srinagar in the autumn of 1989, I. K. Gujral, soon to be named India's Foreign Minister, seemed to side with those who placed greater emphasis on domestic political factors. 'While the foreign hand is discernible,' he wrote, 'some knowledgeable people believe that it is being exaggerated as a cover-up for political lethargy and administrative lapses. The armed forces, by all accounts, have a firm grip on the border and their vigilance evokes confidence.' 'Kashmir: Challenge of Alienation', *Times of India*, 13 October 1989.
9. The allegations appear to have been largely inspired by an article, described by its anonymous authors as 'part fact, part fiction', published in one of India's leading defence journals. The article, which was widely cited (generally without the 'part fiction' caveat) in both the Indian and Pakistani press, described a 'top-level meeting' in Pakistan at which Zia was said to have outlined a plan (Op Topac) for subverting Indian control of Kashmir. See IDR Research Team, 'Op Topac: The Kashmir Imbroglio', *Indian Defence Review* (New Delhi), July 1989, pp. 35–48. It was not inconceivable, of course, that the article was a concoction of Indian intelligence.
10. In March 1990, New Delhi announced an 8.6 per cent increase in the defence budget for 1990–91. This was the first increase in three years; 'Sharp Increase in Defence Outlay', *Telegraph* (Calcutta) 20 March 1990. In April, Prime Minister V. P. Singh was said to have told reporters that the government planned to restore the two-to-one military superiority over Pakistan which he claimed had been lost by the previous government of Rajiv Gandhi: 'India to Restore Military Superiority', *Statesman* (New Delhi), 25 April 1990.
11. Sanjoy Hazarika, 'Pakistan Said to Have Fired on Indian Troops', *New York Times*, 21 August 1990, p. A5.
12. Barbara Crossette, 'Gandhi's Visit to Pakistan: Hopes for a New Era', *New York Times*, 29 December 1988, p. 6Y; and 'Gandhi Ends 3-Day Visit to Pakistan', *New York Times*, 1 January 1989, p. 3Y. The non-attack agreement was originally negotiated with India by President Zia.
13. See Leonard S. Spector, 'India–Pakistan War: It Could Be Nuclear', *New York Times*, 7 June 1990, p. A23; Mushahid Hussain *et al.*, 'War Threat [Cover story]', *Globe* (Karachi), 3:5/6 (June 1990) pp. 14–71; and Shekhar Gupta *et al.*, 'Defence: Are We Prepared?' [Cover story], *India Today*, 30 June 1990, pp. 73–83.

14. For discussion and documentation of these efforts, see Rosalyn Higgins, *United Nations Peacekeeping, 1946–1967, Documents and Commentary, II: Asia* (London: Oxford University Press, 1970) pp. 313–417; K. Sarwar Hasan (ed.), *The Kashmir Question: Documents on the Foreign Relations of Pakistan* (Karachi: Pakistan Institute of International Affairs, 1966); Josef Korbel, *Danger in Kashmir*, revised edition (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1966) pp. 97–197; Sisir Gupta, *Kashmir: A Study in India–Pakistan Relations* (Bombay: Asia Publishing House, 1966) pp. 110–254, 310–42; Alastair Lamb, *The Kashmir Problem: A Historical Survey* (New York: Praeger, 1966) pp. 52–65, 80–91; and Jyoti Bhusan Das Gupta, *Jammu and Kashmir* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1968) pp. 116–183, 249–85.
15. British Mediation of the 1965 Rann of Kutch crisis between India and Pakistan brought about a cease-fire agreement on 30 June 1965. However, the agreement, which was followed in February 1968 by the successful international arbitration of the rightful Sindh–Kutch boundary, applied only to a disputed stretch of the *international* border between India and Pakistan. See Lamb, *The Kashmir Problem*, pp. 112–34; and Rosalyn Higgins, ‘Findings on the Rann of Kutch’, *The World Today*, 24:4 (April 1968) pp. 134–6. In January 1966, the Soviet Union successfully mediated an Indo-Pakistan agreement (the Tashkent Declaration) on a cease-fire and restoration of peaceful relations, thus providing a formal ending to the 1965 war. This agreement provided for little more, however, than restoration of the territorial status quo ante. It noted that the Kashmir dispute had been discussed and that each side had set forth its respective position in regard to this dispute; but there were no provisions for its amelioration. See Thomas Perry Thornton, ‘The Indo-Pakistan Conflict: Soviet Mediation at Tashkent, 1966’, in Saadia Touval and I. William Zartman (eds), *International Mediation in Theory and Practice* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1985) pp. 141–71; and Ian Clark, ‘The USSR and the Tashkent Conference: A Reinterpretation Ten years After’, *Australian Journal of Politics and History*, 23:2 (August 1977) pp. 207–18. Both of the UN peacekeeping operations in Pakistan – the UN Military Observer Group in India and Pakistan (UNMOGIP), 1949 to present, and the shorter-running UN India–Pakistan Observation Mission (UNIPOM), 1965–6 – were mandated strictly for cease-fire supervisory duties. They are thus properly regarded as conflict *management* rather than conflict *resolving* instruments.
16. Sisir Gupta, *Kashmir: A Study in India–Pakistan Relations* (Bombay: Asia Publishing House, 1966) p. 435.
17. *Ibid.*, p. 436; and Ratna Tikoo, *Indo-Pak Relations: Politics of Divergence and Convergence* (New Delhi: National Publishing House, 1987) pp. 11–12.
18. One additional instance of bilateral negotiation should be noted. This was a series of bilateral talks over Kashmir held between representatives of India and Pakistan in the earliest stages of the dispute from 30 October to 8 December 1947. Begun within days of India’s dispatch of troops to Srinagar to stop the tribal invaders, these talks, held in Lahore and New Delhi under the auspices of the Joint [Inter-Dominion] Defence Council, produced no tangible results and were abandoned in favour of UN intercession. For background on bilateral negotiations between India and Pakistan over

- Kashmir, see Korbelt, *Danger in Kashmir*, pp. 88–93, 192–6, 306–11; Das Gupta, *Jammu and Kashmir*, pp. 105–11, 180–3, 293–306; Gupta, *Kashmir: A Study in India–Pakistan Relations*, pp. 129–39, 255–309, 343–61; and Lamb, *The Kashmir Problem*, pp. 80–111.
19. For the correspondence, see Hasan (ed.), *The Kashmir Question*, pp. 330–60.
  20. Gupta, *Kashmir: A Study in India–Pakistan Relations*, pp. 290–3.
  21. Y. D. Gundevia, *Outside the Archives* (Hyderabad: Sangam Books, 1984) p. 248. Gundevia, at the time Secretary of Commonwealth Relations and a participant in the talks, provides by far the most detailed account of them. Another Indian participant in the talks told the author that the territorial offer made by India in these negotiations was the maximum offer India ever made on Kashmir (Major General (Retd) D.K. Palit, ex-Director General, Military Operations, Indian Army, interview (New Delhi) May 1990) Palit, who with Gundevia prepared maps showing the proposed modifications to the CFL for Swaran Singh's use during his private sessions with Bhutto, said that he believed that Swaran Singh may even have offered the Pakistanis a foothold in the coveted Valley of Kashmir itself.
  22. Gundevia, *Outside the Archives*, p. 293.
  23. Das Gupta, *Jammu and Kashmir*, pp. 374–5
  24. The five points included on the agenda were : 1. (a) Determination of elements of a durable peace, (b) withdrawal of forces and repatriation of prisoners of war and interned civilians; 2. (a) Normalisation of relations, (b) diplomatic ties, (c) resumption of air and sea links, including overflights, (d) opening of border posts, (e) adequate travelling facilities to people on both sides; 3. Cessation of hostile propaganda; 4. Restoration of trade and commerce; 5. Exchange in the fields of science, culture and sports. Kuldeep Nayar, *Distant Neighbours* (New Delhi : Vikas, 1972) p. 222.
  25. *Ibid.*, p. 223. Some observers have speculated that the exclusion of Kashmir from the emissary-level discussions may have been the result of Indian fears that it was too explosive to be dealt with at any level less than the summit. Imtiaz H. Bokhari and Thomas Perry Thornton, *The 1972 Simla Agreement: An Asymmetrical Negotiation*, FPI Case Studies Number 11 (Washington, DC: Foreign Policy Institute, The Johns Hopkins University, 1988) p. 26.
  26. *Ibid.*, pp. 234–5.
  27. Apparently in deference to the Indian position, the word 'conflict' was omitted following Jammu and Kashmir. I am indebted to Mr B. G. Verghese, Research Associate, Centre for Policy Research, New Delhi, for bringing this point to my attention. Interview, June 1990.
  28. For background on the origins of the Siachen dispute, see Robert G. Wirsing, *Pakistan's Security Under Zia* (New York: St Martin's Press, 1992), chapter 4. The Pakistan army authorised the author's visit to the glacier in the autumn of 1989; the Indian army did the same in June 1990. Both armies allowed the author considerable freedom to interview senior officers involved at various levels of the conflict over Siachen.
  29. The discussion here on the contents of the Siachen negotiations are based mainly upon author-interviews conducted during visits to the subcontinent in September–October 1989 (Pakistan) and June–July 1990 (India and Pakistan). Interviews with senior military officers and diplomats included five Pakistanis and three Indians directly involved in the negotiations. In

- addition, New Delhi also arranged for a briefing by the Public Relations Directorate of the Ministry of Defence.
30. Interview, Islamabad, July 1990.
31. Interview, Islamabad, June 1990.
32. See, for example, 'Outlook on Siachen', *Times of India*, 12 May 1989 (editorial). Optimism was generally guarded in the weeks prior to the fifth round, however, and sceptical reports were just as common at that time. See, for example, N. Vasuki Rao, 'Breakthrough on Siachen Unlikely', *Indian Express* (New Delhi), 12 June 1989.
33. The briefing, given in the presence of senior Indian army officers, was presented by the Public Relations Directorate of the Ministry of Defence.
34. This point is in reply to Pakistan's claim that its *administrative* control over the Siachen area found international support in two respects: (1) the practice of virtually all international climbing and trekking expeditions to the Siachen area since it was opened to them in 1974 of requesting Pakistani rather than Indian authorisation; and (2) the fact that most major Western atlas-makers began in the late 1970s to show the LOC reaching northeastwards all the way to the Karakoram pass, thus showing the Siachen Glacier entirely in Pakistani territory. For details, see Wirsing, *Pakistan's Security Under Zia*, chapter 4.
35. 'Agreement to Resolve Siachen Issue', *The Muslim* (Islamabad), 18 June 1989.
36. See, for example, 'Siachen: Reason for Hope', *The Muslim*, 19 June 1989 (editorial); 'Breaking the Ice Over Siachen', *Hindustan Times*, 18 June 1989 (editorial); and 'Army Officers to Fix Positions', *The Hindu* (Madras), 18 June 1989. This last report was authored (without byline) by Manoj Joshi, probably the best informed of India's journalists on the subject of the Siachen dispute. In it, he said that India and Pakistan had 'achieved a sort of breakthrough on the Siachen Glacier issue by agreeing to work towards a comprehensive settlement based on redeployment of forces. ... The essence of the proposed settlement is that India will vacate the glacier it has been holding at an enormous cost in men and material since 1984. This is an obvious concession to Pakistan. ... [I]t was felt that a concession should be given to the democratically elected Government of Ms Benazir Bhutto – which could claim that it has succeeded through diplomacy what Gen. Zia had failed to achieve by force, in the wider interest of normalising Indo-Pakistani relations.
37. 'It's a Long Road to Peace in Siachen', *The Hindu*, 21 June 1989.
38. According to a report circulated in the Indian press, a taped version of the airport press conference quoted the Pakistani Foreign Secretary as saying that the Siachen talks 'had led to a significant advance' in the sense that both sides have committed themselves to an observance of the Simla Agreement and re-location of forces to positions occupied at the time of the Simla Agreement. The exact location of these positions will be worked out in detail by military authorities of the two countries'. 'Report on Singh's Statement Denied', *Indian Express*, 23 June 1989.
39. Mr S.K. Singh was reported to have replied to Dr. Khan's comments with the statement: 'I would like to thank the Foreign Secretary, Dr Humayun Khan, and endorse everything he has said' (ibid.).
40. 'India Denies Accord on Siachen', *The Muslim*, 20 June 1989.

41. Richard M. Weintraub, 'Pakistan and India Take Steps to Defuse Long Confrontation Over Siachen Glacier', *Washington Post*, 20 June 1989, p. A28; Sanjoy Hazarika, 'India and Pakistan Plan Pullout of Troops from Disputed Glacier', *New York Times*, 28 June 1989, p. 2Y; 'It's a Long Road to Peace in Siachen', *The Hindu*, 21 June 1989; and 'India Says No to '72 Troop Pullback Status', *Telegraph* (Calcutta), 20 June 1989. Adding to the confusion, some press accounts, including the last named above, quoted the joint statement of the defence secretaries' meeting as having said that the two countries would work 'towards a comprehensive settlement based on *deployment* of forces to reduce chances of conflict...' [emphasis added].
42. Interviews, Islamabad, June–July 1990.
43. Interview, New Delhi, June 1990.
44. Interview, June 1990.
45. Lt General M. L. Chibber, 'Siachen Solution Will Help India, Pak', *Times of India*, 13 June 1989. The article was an abbreviated version of an essay that appeared some months later in an Indian defence journal. See Lt General M. L. Chibber, 'Siachen – The Untold Story (A Personal Account)', *Indian Defence Review* (January 1990) pp. 146–52.
46. Interviews, India and Pakistan, September–October 1989 and June–July 1990. For an examination of the debate over the Siachen's strategic utility, see the author's study, *Pakistan's Security Under Zia*, chapter 4.
47. Pakistan's 'counter-boundary' policy on Kashmir is explored in detail in *ibid.*
48. For details, see *ibid.* A major contributor to the evolution of Pakistan's claim was the Defense Mapping Agency of the US Government, whose Operational Navigation Chart of northern Kashmir, published in 1974, showed an Air Defense Information Zone (ADIZ) perimeter boundary running in a straight line northeastwards from the terminus of the LOC at map coordinate NJ 9842 to the Karakoram pass.
49. On Indian military maps of the Siachen area, the Indian claim line running from map coordinate NJ 9842 northeastwards along the crestline of the Saltoro range is labelled as the Actual Ground Position Line (AGPL).
50. A near-uniform assumption in Indian analyses of the Siachen problem is that the *intention* of the authors of the original CFL was that the CFL should run in a northwards direction all the way to the border with China. Based on an interpretation of wording in the 1949 cease-fire agreement, this would put much of the Siachen Glacier legally in Indian hands. This is the interpretation given in the military briefing on Siachen given the author in New Delhi in June 1990. For Indian argumentation on this point, see Jasjit Singh, 'Siachen Glaciers: Facts and Fiction', *Strategic Analysis*, 12:7 (October 1989) pp. 697–708; and K. Subrahmanyam, 'Kashmir', *Strategic Analysis*, 13:2 (May 1990) pp. 135–6.
51. Interview, New Delhi, June 1990.
52. Interview, New Delhi, June 1990. Article 370 of the Indian Constitution provides Jammu and Kashmir State with special autonomous rights (including retention of its own constitution) within the Indian federal system. It was adopted in deference to the unique (and somewhat conditional) manner in which Jammu and Kashmir acceded to the Indian Union in October 1947.



53. B.G. Verghese, 'Shibboleths Must Be Shed to Resolve Kashmir Tangle', *Times of India*, 8 February 1990.
54. Interview, Islamabad, October 1989.
55. Retired Brigadier Abdul Rahman Siddiqi, 'The Kashmir Resistance: An Analysis', *Defence Journal* (Karachi), 16:3 (March 1990) pp. 3, 6–7. The Gibraltar episode refers to a covert Pakistani army operation in early summer of 1965, involving the infiltration of Pakistani irregulars across the CFL into the Indian Kashmir. The operation, which led by September to fullscale war between India and Pakistan, was supposed to ignite an uprising among the Kashmiri Muslims in the Valley. It was a complete failure.
56. Gupta, *Kashmir: A Study in India–Pakistan Relations*, pp. 282–5. 'It was not only in Pakistan', Gupta wrote of the failure of direct negotiations in 1953–4,

that the government of the day was criticized for its tendency to peacefully settle issues with the other country through a process of give and take, but certainly, of the two governments, that of Pakistan was more liable to pressure and vulnerable to attacks. It had yet to find its feet, and political stability was still eluding Pakistan. In India's elected Parliament not even one per cent of the members were from those parties which would be openly hostile to moves for an Indo-Pakistan settlement. In Pakistan, a major portion of the ruling party's members had expressed an attitude of non-compromise.... India was often the weapon with which many of the newspaper would beat a government they disliked for other reasons. Likewise, for politicians out of power India was a convenient slogan to use. (Ibid., p. 284)

57. Ibid., p. 453.
58. Interview, New Delhi, June 1990.
59. The crippling impact of the 'attitudinal prism' of Indian foreign policy decision-makers in the Sino-Indian war of 1962, including their 'absolute conviction of the righteousness of India's cause', has been carefully examined in an illuminating recent study by Steven A. Hoffmann, *India and the China Crisis* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990) esp. pp. 117–29, 163–75. When it comes to self-righteous nationalism, Indian policymakers cannot be accused of taking second place to anyone. Wrote a former Indian Foreign Secretary about Indian concessions to Pakistan in the 1972 Simla agreement:

Can any Harvard professors of history, who have quite frequently been close advisers of US Presidents, point to a parallel in the conduct of diplomatic and military affairs with this degree of international ethics and international morality anywhere in 'civilized' Europe or, for that matter, anywhere in the 'Free World' that Europe and the USA claim to have created after the defeat of Hitler and Mussolini? How does all this India–Pakistan history from 1947 to 1972 compare with the conduct of Israel, always championed by the West and buttressed with billions of dollars of American arms against the Arabs in Middle Asia?

This was, altogether and throughout, Gandhian philosophy and Gandhian ethics, from the parlour to the battlefield, consistently practised

by three successive Prime Ministers – Nehru in 1947, Shastri in 1965 and Nehru's daughter, Indira, in 1971. Petty Machiavellian politicians outside India cannot obviously be expected to understand this. (Gundevia, *Outside the Archives*, pp. 335–6)

60. For recent commentaries on Pakistani politics, see Mahnaz Ispahani, *Pakistan: Dimensions of Insecurity*, Adelphi Papers 246 (London: International Institute for Strategic Studies, Winter 1989/90); Paula R. Newberg, 'Pakistan at the Edge of Democracy', *World Policy Journal*, 6:3 (Summer 1989) pp. 563–87; Anthony Hyman, *Pakistan: Towards a Modern Muslim State?*, Conflict Studies 227 (London: Research Institute for the Study of Conflict and Terrorism, January 1990); and John Bray, 'Pakistan: The Democratic Balance-Sheet', *The World Today*, 46:6 (June 1990) pp. 111–14.
61. Ibid., p. 111.
62. Dennis Austin and Anirudha Gupta, *The Politics of Violence in India and South Asia: Is Democracy an Endangered Species?*, Conflict Studies 233 (London: Research Institute for the Study of Conflict and Terrorism, July/August 1990).
63. Sanjoy Hazarika, 'Rival of Singh to Be India's Premier', *New York Times*, 10 November 1990, p. 3Y.
64. Richard Sisson and Leo E. Rose, *War and Secession: Pakistan, India, and the Creation of Bangladesh* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990) p. 217. 'Much Indian attention during the war', according to the authors,

was directed to influencing the public and key political leaders and groups in the West, particularly the United States, to pressure their governments to adopt pro-Indian – or at least refrain from anti-Indian – policies. With the cooperation of most of the Western media, India was spectacularly successful in this endeavor. India had, of course, a good case to make in terms of Pakistani atrocities in East Pakistan, and it found the foreign press incredibly gullible in accepting, without effort at verifying, the substantial exaggerations that were appended to the list of horror stories from Dhaka.

India also made a serious effort to at least minimize support for Pakistan within the Islamic bloc by emphasizing that this was a Muslim versus Muslim (Pakistan versus Bangladesh) war and not another Hindu–Muslim conflict.

65. For application of the concept of 'security complexes' to South Asia, see Barry Buzan and Gowher Rizvi (eds), *South Asian Insecurity and the Great Powers* (New York: St Martin's Press, 1986).
66. See Raju G.C. Thomas (ed.), *The Great-Power Triangle and Asian Security* (Lexington: Lexington Books, 1983); and Robert J. McMahon, 'United States Cold War Strategy in South Asia: Making a Military Commitment to Pakistan, 1947–1954', *Journal of American History*, 75:3 (December 1988) pp. 812–40.
67. Michael R. Gordon, 'U.S. Is Said to Broach Waiver of Arms Ban on Aid to Pakistan', *New York Times*, 2 October, 1990, p. A4.

68. See M.S. Rajan and Nirmala Joshi, 'Soviet Union and India's Nuclear Policy', *Mainstream*, 28 July, 1990.
69. For a sampling of recent ideas, see the special issue on 'Managing Regional Conflict', *International Journal* (Canadian Institute of International Affairs), 45:2 (Spring 1990).
70. US President George Bush has been quoted in the Indian press, for example, as having welcomed the incoming Indian Ambassador, Mr Abid Hussain, at a ceremony held in Washington on 30 May 1990, with the words: 'I urge [the leaders of India and Pakistan] to seek negotiation and conciliation rather than confrontations. ...It is my hope and intention that the United States should remain as a helpful friend to both countries in [their] efforts to ease tensions. ...We have called on India and Pakistan to cease preparations for war and to reverse steps already taken which seem provocative to the other side. We continue to support the Shimla Agreement of 1972 as the best framework for a peaceful resolution of the dispute, and we call on both India and Pakistan to begin bilateral talks without preconditions.' Manoj Joshi, 'US Concerns Over Kashmir', *The Hindu* (New Delhi), 2 June 1990. See also, A. Balu, 'Bush Calls for Talks on J-K', *Indian Express*, 31 May, 1990.
71. The view that India conceded too much in the Simla pact is not uncommon among Indians. A former Indian Foreign Secretary, for example, was reported to have said in March 1990 that India erred at Simla in agreeing to bilateral negotiations as a basis for settling Kashmir, since that allowed Pakistan to set unacceptable terms. 'Scrap Shimla Agreement, says A. P. Venkateswaran', *Organiser* (New Delhi) 8 April 1990.
72. For an Indian view of the failure of Western mediation proposals in 1963, see Gundevia, *Outside the Archives*, pp. 295-310.
73. Public attacks on the UN's peacekeeping mission in Kashmir, UNMOGIP, are quite commonplace, especially in India. The mission is often accused of harbouring spies, and there was a report in July 1990 that the Ministry of External Affairs in New Delhi was considering a demand for the recall of the observers from Kashmir. Janak Singh, 'India May Seek Recall of UN Group', *Times of India*, 7 July, 1990. See also 'Snooping in Peace: UN Observers in Kashmir Accused of Spying', *The Week* (Cochin), 12 August, 1990; and Rakesh Kumar Datta, 'The Insecurity Issue in J&K', *Tribune* (Chandigarh), 13 August 1990.
74. Contrary to the view expressed in this chapter, some Indian observers viewed the mission, which was led by the President's National Security Advisor, Robert M. Gates, as the first step in a major US initiative aimed at final resolution of the Kashmir problem. See, for example, Manoj Joshi, 'US Concerns Over Kashmir', *The Hindu*, 2 June, 1990.
75. The United States reportedly failed in May 1990 to get Moscow to join with Washington in a joint appeal to India and Pakistan to show greater restraint in Kashmir. A. Balu, 'Soviets "Shy Away" From Big-2 Appeal on J-K', *Indian Express*, 26 May 1990.
76. In Pakistan, the frequency of the government's publicly expressed commitment to a plebiscite in Jammu and Kashmir bears almost no relation to the quantum of private confidence one finds among Pakistanis in regard

to either its potential fairness or its feasibility. Nevertheless, while the demand for a plebiscite has been drained, over time, of practically all of its *literal* meaning for Pakistanis, it remains a powerful *symbolic* expression of a continuing international stake in the settlement of the Kashmir dispute. Even in strictly bilateral negotiations over Kashmir, the legitimacy of this stake is a useful bargaining counter for Pakistan and a hedge against having to play against uneven odds. The weariness with Pakistan that one meets on occasion in this regard is an understandable but, in terms of conflict resolution, unfortunate development.

77. Believing that it would almost certainly lead to a wider war, India and Pakistan have been careful to observe a tacit ban on the use of combat aircraft in the Siachen fighting.

# 10 From an Empire State to a Nation State: the Impact of Ethno-Religious Conflicts on India's Foreign Policy

Maya Chadda

## INTRODUCTION

Since the 1980s, it has become increasingly evident that India is faced with far greater danger to her security from conflicts within her borders than from conflicts with hostile powers beyond her border. On the other hand, the steady expansion in indigenous weapons production and the acquisition of sophisticated arms from abroad has made India the most powerful country, far outstripping other smaller states in the region. Yet, the events during the decade of the 1980s suggest that India's growing superiority in arms has not countered her sense of growing vulnerability.

What reasons can one offer for this strange paradox? What underlies the pervasive fear of political disintegration when smooth transitions to successive governments, nine general elections, and the remarkable strength of her democracy since 1947, should have inspired confidence. These contradictions between reality and perception are critical to the understanding of India's role in the region, and the ways in which her leaders respond to challenges from the outside. In this chapter, an attempt is made to look at India's policy from the inside out, and to outline the ways in which problems of national integration and political stability extend and become a part of her foreign relations.

Throughout the 1980s, India was driven by a series of ethnic and religious conflicts that had a damaging impact on her ties with the neighbouring states. In 1983, the civil war in Sri Lanka spilled over into the state of Tamil Nadu and subsequently led to a military intervention by India in that country. The militant separatism in the Punjab during the early 1980s, and seven years later in the state of Kashmir, brought India and Pakistan at least twice close to the brink of war, first during operation 'Brass Tacks' and the second time in the summer of 1990.

Throughout the summer and early autumn of 1990, terrorism and violence mounted in Kashmir and the Punjab. The Government of Prime Minister V. P. Singh was convinced, as were his predecessors, that Pakistan was encouraging the separatists. A political compromise in the Punjab and Kashmir was, however, ruled out because of the coalition nature of the Singh government. The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), a Hindu nationalist force and the major supporter of the Singh government in the Parliament, was set against any concessions to the separatists, particularly if they happened to be Muslims. The BJP had its own political agenda which was to establish a 'Hindu Rashtra' ideology at the centre. The continued impasse in the Punjab and Kashmir, however, raised tensions between India and Pakistan to a fever pitch by the winter of 1990. A war between the two seemed imminent.

While these developments endangered India's security, her domestic stability was further eroded when the BJP launched, in February 1991, a nationwide agitation to construct a Ram Temple in place of a sixteenth-century mosque in the city of Ayodhya. Unable to stem the tide of protests, the Singh government collapsed in March 1991. There is, then, a connection between India's problems in the Punjab, Kashmir, Ayodhya and Pakistan; between domestic preoccupations and foreign policy, and between the balance of forces within India and the balance of relations in the region.

A glance at the history of post-Independence India shows that the connection between ethnopolitics and foreign policy is not a new development, although there is undeniably a closer bonding between the two since the 1980s. In the early 1970s, the spread of Bengali nationalism across international boundaries had precipitated a war over Bangladesh. Going back even further, the very creation of India and Pakistan was a result of the ethnic-religious conflicts that had led to communal violence, massive transfer of population and partition of the subcontinent. Ethnic conflicts have drawn and redrawn the international boundaries in South Asia.

Even further back in the past, the Mughal and British imperial powers had to contend with frequent local and regional challenges. At times, regions collaborated with the central authority; at other times, they fought against imposition of central rule, but, in each instance, the relations between the regions and the central power were critical to South Asia's evolution toward modern statehood.

The growing incidence of political turmoil, in the period since Independence, indicates that neither economic growth nor the expansion of democracy can defuse the disruptive potential of ethnic and religious demands.

In fact, these have sharpened the cutting edge of ethnic claims and their ability to create conflicts within and between independent neighbouring states of South Asia.

The secessionist movements in the Punjab and Kashmir, then, touch fears that go beyond the concerns over the immediate problems in these states; they raise the spectre of yet another division of India. These historically-formed perceptions – and the fears and ambitions they nourish – are critical to the way in which Indian leaders respond to threats from beyond India's borders. In fact, the very process by which modern India was created, and the subcontinent models of the state is incorporated, suggest that the fear of domestic disintegration is a central force shaping its policies in the region.

In this chapter we will step back from the calculations based on immediate interests and, instead, focus on the crosscurrents of history that have forged the modern state of India. In particular, we will discuss the following four broad questions: what connections has history forged between India's social heterogeneity and her central political authority?; how has the central state in independent India reconciled the conflicting claims of ethnic and all India nationalism?; Why is there a closer bonding between India's ethno-religious conflicts and foreign policy in the 1980s?; and last, what effects have these developments had on India's role in the region?

The purpose here is not to give a chronological account of India's history but merely to tease out from its past themes that have endured and shaped the character of the modern Indian state and its role in the region. Similarly, the historical perspective is offered as a complement and a corrective, and not as a substitute for explanations that are based on the balance-of-power theories and state-to-state interactions. Nor is it suggested that all foreign-policy responses by New Delhi are affected by ethnic conflicts or that every ethnic conflict extends into foreign policy. Some ethnic conflicts do; others don't. However, their increasing importance to India's security and foreign policy, for the reasons discussed below, cannot be ignored.

#### WHAT CONNECTIONS HAS HISTORY FORGED BETWEEN INDIA'S SOCIAL HETEROGENEITY AND ITS CENTRAL STATE?

The perception of what is strictly domestic and what belongs to foreign policy has been shifting throughout India's political history, domestic purview has extended with the expansion of the subcontinental empires

and contracted when such empires broke up into independent regional entities. The definition of domestic as distinct from foreign policy has been altered in equal parts by the dominant ideas about kingdoms, state and power. Recent research and writing on India show that the persistence of enduring tensions between regional centres of power and central authority is a fundamental theme, the master idea that has shaped its political evolution.<sup>1</sup>

This tension has preoccupied the early empire states of ancient India, the rulers of medieval and colonial India, and the leaders of modern India. Can there be a stable and unified political entity under a single authority stretching across the subcontinent of India? Can such a kingdom or state survive the pressure and pulls of sectarian separatism?

These questions have formed the grand theme, the organising idea throughout India's political past. At least two forces have shaped the tension between regions and central powers: a competition between contending elites – on one hand those that control the central state, and on the other, those who speak for the region – for legitimate political space; and a competition between rival ideologies, one overarching and subcontinental in nature and the other limited in cultural scope and confined to a compact territorial unit.<sup>2</sup>

Throughout India's political experience, kingdoms, regions and ethnic nations have insisted on an independent territorial and political jurisdiction. In contrast, those who have controlled India's political centre have claimed overarching jurisdiction that would transcend demands by particular ethnic groups. These conflicts about political space account for not only a large number of domestic tensions in the region but also why such conflicts lead to intervention outside what are, today, India's sovereign boundaries.

### **The Historic Model of the Central State**

Although the modern nation state of India, with its present boundaries, was forged under British colonial rule, India has known and evolved its own forms of legal political state through history. In the opinion of Lloyd and Susanne Rudolph, the Indian state has a 'long tradition of high stateness that reaches back to India's ancient empires and medieval regional kingdoms'.<sup>3</sup> The latter Mughal and British states were of course more directly responsible for shaping the modern state of India but these states absorbed the patterns of power and practices already established in the subcontinent. There is, then, a recognisable continuity to the state forms that have evolved throughout India's history.



As India looks back to its political past, the model that comes closest to the modern state of India, and one that has inspired the succession of states in India, is a subcontinental multinational state. Such a state had been realised in the pre-Christian era by the Mauryas, particularly under Asoka Maurya (312–185 BC) and by the imperial rule of the Guptas (AD 319–540). In the seventh century, under Harshvardhana, once again vast territories came under a single central rule. For long stretches of history however, the subcontinent remained a place of regional kingdoms perpetually at war with their neighbours.<sup>4</sup>

After the collapse of Harshvardhana, regional kingdoms rose and fell from power but none was able to fuse culture, ideology and territorial base to create a cohesive and enduring state over the stretch of the subcontinent until the advent of the Mughal rule in the sixteenth century. The Mughal control of the subcontinent lasted two hundred years, giving way once again to internecine warfare between Rajputs and Maratha feudatories. A hundred years were to elapse before the British established their empire in India, transforming the subcontinent in ways that made the modern state of India possible.

The course of this history shows that empires emerged by establishing hegemony over diverse regional kingdoms. Such kingdoms stood in tension with the subcontinental empires and refused to be fully absorbed or integrated into the central state. Independent India's federal arrangement is but the latest acknowledgement of this historic reality. India's political history is, then, characterised by an enduring struggle between at least two possible forms of state power: one, a subcontinental empire that stretches over vast territory and diverse ethnic and religious communities, and subjects their intercourse to the needs of maintaining its dominance; and second, a regional political structure, narrowly identified with a particular political elite, dynasty or ethnic nations, limited in territorial scope and characterised by a high degree of commonality in cultural values. Each model of state is predicated on a distinctly different arrangement of political power in the subcontinent and implies a different relationship between the Indian state and its neighbours.

The empire of the Mauryas was not like the empire of the Mughals, nor was the Mughal rule the same as the colonial Raj that followed. It is possible nevertheless to abstract from their history the basis of their survival and organisation. First, each empire state created a universal order that transcended specific ideologies and beliefs, it did not seek to eliminate them. The state created its own overarching ideology that was both tolerant and inclusive. Every empire state explicitly recognised the extant social order. Separate caste and religious communities were accom-

modated within the broad framework of the overarching ideology, where each maintained its distinctive identity but, also, each such subordinate group derived its place in reference to the whole.<sup>5</sup>

### *1. A Universal Ideological Order*

Creation of a universal ideological order was the purpose of the Dhamma policy established by Asoka Maurya, whose empire encompassed diverse religious sects, communities, kingdoms and tribes. Combining Buddhist ethics and Kautilya's political ideas, Dhamma required the sovereign and all his subjects to respect diversity and practise tolerance.<sup>6</sup> In the Hindu Dharmashastras, the social order was prior to the king, and the sovereign was required to uphold the authority vested in the customary law, traditions and caste practices. The state only stepped in when conflict between rival religious or caste communities threatened the political order.

Similar principles also guided the Mughal kings as they settled in India. The Mughals created a universal order based on absolute power (a legacy of their Persian and Mongol traditions) and combined this with the Hindu notion of the universal king, the Chakravartin.<sup>7</sup> Their belief in the absolute power of the king allowed them to override the demands of the religious establishment, while the ideal of the Hindu king enjoined them to uphold and protect the existing social order. Although forced conversions to Islam were quite common and as a rule the Muslims in Mughal India enjoyed greater access to power and positions, the Mughal kings, by and large, left Hindu society to follow its own rhythm and customary laws.

Similarly, after the 1857 Mutiny, the British clamped down on the activities of the Christian missionaries, and abandoned their earlier reformist zeal (the legislation against Suttee, child marriage, and so on). Queen Victoria's proclamation of 1858 had declared unequivocal suzerainty of the Crown over the entire subcontinent, but the Raj also promised that it would recognise the primacy of the extant social order.<sup>8</sup> The British created their version of the overarching order based on uniform law, administration, and a legal-political state rooted in their liberal beliefs. The social reforms that came after the mutiny, came as a result of demands by indigenous reform movements (the Arya Samaj and Brahmo Samaj). The British had no desire to legislate social change or alter customary law by legal fiat.

### *2. Recognition of Local Structures and Layering of Power*

Although each empire state – the ancient polity of the Mauryas, the Islamic system of the Mughals and the British Raj – had emerged as a result of

conquest and wars, they did not rule by eliminating the indigenous political structures. This was the second common characteristic shared by the empire states in India. The empire of the Mauryas and Guptas was a tributary system organised by Mandalas or spheres of influence, at the centre of which was the Chakravartin, the paramount king.<sup>9</sup> The feudatories were obliged to provide the central ruler with tribute, soldiers and their presence during royal ceremonies.

Beyond that, the vassal states retained a large degree of freedom in domestic and foreign policy. Similarly, the Mughal kings tried to establish an absolute state, but soon recognised the logic of regional autonomy and gave the Rajput and Maratha feudatories considerable latitude in local matters. The British, too, saw the wisdom in layering of political power. The 1858 proclamation had firmly established the Queen as the paramount ruler, the universal sovereign (analogous to the Chakravartin), and the symbol of India's political unity. Nevertheless, British India recognised a large number of princely states that exercised, at least in principle, sovereign jurisdiction over their territories.<sup>10</sup> The Muslims and the Sikh communities were given special recognition and separate electoral representation. These practices show that the imperial power explicitly recognised India's ethnic groups and regions and the wisdom in allowing them a degree of freedom.<sup>11</sup>

### *3. A State Autonomous from the Social Order*

The third characteristic derived from the first two. Each empire state enjoyed considerable autonomy from India's existing social order. The overarching ideology of the state meant that it transcended particular interests – it did not emulate or represent such interests. The state was able to lay claim to its exclusive preserve, which was greater than the territory of any compact regional state, independent from the claims of any particular ethnic, religious or regional claims, and in command of resources that went beyond the power of any specific region. It stretched over many parts but it was larger than the sum of all its parts. This element of autonomy allowed the state to balance off conflicting constituencies within its territorial jurisdiction. And this, in turn, allowed the state to claim tolerance and impartiality.

The power and authority of the subcontinental empire state was sustained by pomp and ceremony, and in the case of the Mughals and the British by imposition of a foreign language, patronage of arts and education, building of magnificent monuments and buildings. It was also sustained by a centralised fiscal system, patrimonial bureaucracies and military formations funded and controlled by the ruler.<sup>12</sup>

#### 4. *Ambivalence Regarding Boundaries*

The fourth feature of the empire state concerned its outer territorial limits. Until the advent of the British on the scene, the external boundaries of all subcontinental states remained largely amorphous and vague. In the early empires, the Mandala system forestalled fixing of boundaries. To the Mughal rulers, territorial sovereignty meant the ability to collect revenue and command the loyalty of local chieftains in time of war. The outer limits of such control, writes one historian, 'would expand or contract depending upon the ability and resources of a ruler at a particular time'.<sup>13</sup> Initially as an expanding power, and later, on the defensive against the Marathas, the Mughals found it both impossible and undesirable to fix boundaries.

The British broke with the past in this one respect. They introduced the notion of fixed boundaries that were clearly demarcated on the ground and drawn on maps. The purpose was to give exact geographic definition to the term 'India'. And in fixing the boundaries they were, in their own eyes, creating a distinct nation state of India. The British were driven by the need to establish defensible frontiers that reached 'the natural limits of expansion, one that was dictated by geography, and terrain'. They were not moved by arguments based on historic claims, or natural breaks of cultural and ethnic nationalities.<sup>14</sup>

The British refusal to allow a determining role to racial, linguistic and religious factors in drawing up boundaries was consonant with the understanding the nineteenth-century rulers had of India. As a political entity, they would have insisted, India was a creation of the same power that drew its frontiers. Its identity as a nation followed from the definition of the frontiers; they were not marking off an existing nation.<sup>15</sup>

These features of the historical state – preservation of cultural diversity within an overarching political order, layering of territorial power, creation of distinct autonomy for the central state – have conferred a legacy of contradictions that no leader of independent India has been able to overcome or ignore.

### **Contradictions and Conflicts: Inheritance of the Past**

First among these contradictions is the confusion between ethnic demography and sovereign borders. This confusion has led to domestic instability and regional tensions in South Asia since 1947. The British created a subcontinental empire but saw it as a nation state with fixed boundaries and well defined national interests. They had encouraged the separate identities of India's ethnic and religious sub-nations, but these

were contained within the limits of fixed boundaries. However, such fixed boundaries conflicted with the model of the subcontinental empires that had evolved in South Asia and the diverse cultural nationalities they have historically encompassed. Indeterminate borders had allowed the empire state to ignore or accommodate demands of ethnic and regional centres more easily without jeopardising its paramourcy.<sup>16</sup> However, once India's borders became fixed, every regional challenge became a potential threat to the unity and sovereignty of the empire state.

The leaders of modern India must continue what the British began: forging a nation state, unified and whole, out of a multi-nation empire. They must do this while rejecting the very principles that held the past empires together. This inheritance from history has produced yet another dilemma about what should come first in democratic India: the claims based on culture and religious continuity, or the limits based on sovereign jurisdiction.

There is a commonly held perception in India – yet another contribution of history – that the Indian nation state is a foreign legacy and a result of conquest by alien powers. This has spawned at least two sets of responses that are relevant to the question of ethnic and religious conflicts: one from the secular nationalists, who sought to Indianise the 'foreign' legacy; and the other from the Hindu nationalists, who kept the idea of the subcontinental state but rejected the contributions 'foreigners' had made to it.<sup>17</sup> Jawaharlal Nehru, a secular nationalist and an architect of independent India, acknowledged the political contribution of the British but stressed the unity of India as a single civilisation, and believed that a strong and impartial state would be able to counter India's tendency to fragment. On the other hand, the Hindu nationalists insisted that India was not only a distinct civilisation but also a unified political entity in the past, even before its subjugation by the Muslims and the British. In fact, they have argued, the policy of forced conversions to Islam, and the British practice of setting up religious minorities against the Hindu majority, resulted in sowing the seeds of separation in India. These, the Hindu nationalists argue, have reaped the bitter harvest of violence and separatism in the subcontinent. The Hindu nationalists are convinced that harmony can be restored if the central state ceases to empower minorities and, instead, restores the majority community to its natural preeminence in politics.

The grand struggle between these two overarching ideologies is complicated by yet another legacy of history: the continuing tension between compact, regional political structures and the central state. Every political centre at the apex, whether it was the 'old regime' of the pre-Christian era or the modern state of India, has had to guard against the push and pull of

regions and sub-nationalities.<sup>18</sup> These sub-nationalities have sided at times with the secular forces and at other times with their antagonists. More often than not, they have created ideologies that mirror the militancy and violence of their Hindu counterpart. For example, the demand for Khalistan, or a separate Muslim state, is based on essentially the same logic as the argument about a Hindustan for the Hindus. Each has claimed distinctive identity and ruled out coexistence.

Lastly, history has shown that much of India's political experience is dominated by a cyclical ebb and flow of power to and away from the centre. Periods of political consolidation were followed by invasions and perilous fragmentation. This reality of India's past has left a deep impression on the political leaders of modern India. For them, the past has contributed a political structure that promises unity, but it has also shown how fragile and conditional such unity can be. However, this persistent sense of national fragility among the people and leaders of India contradicted the fact that by any measure of power theirs was the strongest country in the subcontinent.

#### HOW HAS THE CENTRAL STATE IN INDEPENDENT INDIA RECONCILED THE CLAIMS OF REGIONS WITH ALL INDIA NATIONALISM?

The political design of independent India has incorporated all the essential elements contained in the historic multi-national state. Secularism, federalism and democracy were to be the guiding principles of the new nation state of India. The principle of impartiality in religion and law was enshrined in secularism; a federal polity was to provide full expression to regional and ethnic autonomy, while democracy was to make possible a sharing of power among diverse constituencies. A strong central government was to be the focus of symbolic and real power, it was to be the centre of political order and the guardian of its sovereignty.

These principles no doubt spoke about the liberal orientation of India's leaders but, more importantly, they revealed the even deeper concerns for national unity and integration. In foreign policy India opted for non-alignment, insisting on freedom to choose its friends and allies and protect interests that flowed from its domestic goals, subcontinental size and desire for economic advancement.

The new state of independent India had, however, broken with the subcontinental model in at least two ways. The historical state had been a limited state, committed to upholding the social order and the primacy of

customary law. In contrast, the new nation state of India was to be an interventionist state that was determined to industrialise the economy, legislate social reform, shape the nation's political culture, and make India a powerful actor on the international stage. Moreover, it was determined to do all this within a framework of expanding democracy.

### **From an Empire to a Nation State: the Dilemmas of Transition**

In 1947, by popular acclaim, power passed into the hands of the secular nationalists. For them, the empire state of India was the same as the nation state of India, and the newly independent India was the same as the Bharatvarsha of their historical imagination. However, the separate definitions of India – the empire state, the nation state, and a distinctive entity of single civilisation – did not coincide, and the nationalists' perceptions conflicted with the reality.

#### *The Communal Divide*

The demand for a separate nation of Pakistan, and the war over Kashmir, were the first challenges to the nationalist notion of the Bharatvarsha, shattering their belief that the Hindus and Muslims belonged to the same single coherent subcontinental civilisation. The partition turned out to be a human tragedy of unprecedented proportion. The Indian leaders emerged from it determined never to allow another division of India. They dropped the idea of a loose federation and opted for a strong superordinate state of India to be created.<sup>19</sup> Although the partition had reduced the size of the independent India, it was still a multi-religious, multi-ethnic subcontinental country. The model of the empire state still applied.

#### *Multiple Sovereignties*

The second problem in making the transition from the British to an independent India was the existence of 584 princely states who were resisting integration into the new state of India. India's leaders moved forcefully and decisively to absorb these and establish their unchallenged control over the post-partition India.<sup>20</sup> In their view, force was justified if used to protect and unify the nation. Use of coercion did not conflict with their promise to make India a secular and democratic country.

#### *The Ethnic Divide*

The first decade of independence witnessed such a remarkable consolidation of democracy in India that its leader were also able to resolve the third major crisis – a demand for linguistic reorganisation – without

jeopardising the unity and integrity of the state. In fact, the redrawing of the federal boundaries only further strengthened the overarching power of the central government.<sup>21</sup>

These two events, the integration of the princely states and the linguistic reorganisation, reveal the broad parameters that would now guide independent India, at least until the mid-seventies. It was apparent that the state would not tolerate any compromise with its authority and territorial jurisdiction but, beyond that, it was willing to concede to a new layering of power and accommodate the culturally diverse sub-nationalities of India. Thus, on one hand, the paramountcy of the subcontinental state as in full effect; while on the other, democracy forestalled threats to its sovereign power.

Once the linguistic reorganisation had been put in place, there were no serious threats to the authority of the central state or to the unity of India until the late 1960s. The rise of the Dravida movement (the DMK) in Tamil Nadu and the demand for a Punjabi Subha did not spill beyond the boundaries of the state and were defused with political concession. In fact, the nationalistic fervour that swept over India during the war with China in 1962, and with Pakistan in 1965, neutralised both the ethnic agitations.

### **The New Factors Contributing to Unity and Disintegration**

The central state was able to consolidate its authority and meet the initial challenges without jeopardising the country, mainly because the nationalist movement had unified India and the Congress Party had inherited the mantle of unifying nationalism. The Congress Party had emerged to be the most important force straddling the length and breadth of the country. It controlled not only the central government but also most of India's federal units. Its leaders commanded vast popular support, were experienced in competitive politics and had a remarkable grasp of international politics. This preeminence of the Congress Party and its virtual monopoly of national politics provided the central state with a large degree of latitude in domestic and foreign policy. Although India had begun to function as a democracy, a new generation of political elite had not yet emerged to challenge the leaders drawn from the nationalist movement. The vast mobilisation of India's urban and rural electorate so apparent in the 1970s and 1980s was yet to occur.

The autonomy of the central state could not, however, outlast the rapid expansion in plebiscitary democracy. By 1967, the Congress Party had lost



its dominant position and yielded eight states to regional political parties of the opposition. A weakened Congress meant a weaker centre and de facto devolution of power to the federal units, since no viable alternative was available.<sup>22</sup> Mrs Gandhi responded to these developments by splitting the Congress Party, and redefining its ideology by moving to the left.<sup>23</sup> Under her leadership, the Congress Party managed to regain control of the central state but its unequivocal dominance over Indian politics had been lost.

After 1967, several regional parties emerged to take control of India's linguistically reorganised federal states. The expansion of democracy had sparked political ambitions in India's regional leaders, who saw their road to power paved by greater local autonomy and less federal control. Regional autonomy could still have coexisted with a strong centre had the state not chosen to be interventionist and had democracy not begun to link social conflicts to political power. The growing demand for autonomy by local and ethnic leaders, however, raised old fears that the pulls and pressures from such groups might fragment India.<sup>24</sup>

The Bangladesh crisis of 1971 temporarily reinforced the central state, but it also exposed the fundamental conflict between sovereignty and nationalism. As discussed earlier, India's ethnic nations do not coincide with her sovereign jurisdiction. After the partition and war with Pakistan, Jawaharlal Nehru, India's first Prime Minister, had tried to solve this problem by committing India to a territorial status quo (with the exception of Goa) and good neighbourly policy. He had also forsworn political responsibility for people of Indian origin beyond her post-Independence borders. For example, when the question of the Tamil population of Sri Lanka came up, Prime Minister Nehru targeted only the stateless Indians (who had migrated to work on plantations) of Sri Lanka as India's primary concern. The Sri Lankan Tamils were the citizens of that country and were to be exclusively Sri Lanka's responsibility.

The mobilisation of Bengali nationalism across international borders in 1971 and the migration of nearly ten million refugees into India, however, challenged the doctrine of inviolate boundaries. Mrs Gandhi's decision to intervene militarily in Pakistan's civil war was a fundamental departure from the Nehruvian approach to international politics.<sup>25</sup> It established the principle that India would use force to restore stability in an adjacent state if such instability jeopardised India's domestic tranquility.

There were of course, major political gains to be made from the military intervention. Pakistan was reduced in size and forced to accept India's position on the Kashmir dispute, and India was established as the mili-

tarily dominant power in South Asia. There were domestic political gains as well.<sup>26</sup> The Congress Party won the 1972 assembly elections with a landslide, sweeping several opposition parties out of power. The Bangladesh triumph restored the central state's sagging position.

The expanding popular participation in politics also produced a contradiction between democracy and secularism. The new entrants to the political arena were less committed to the liberal, secular ideas, and much more closely wedded to their ethnic, religious identities. They soon discovered that ethnic, regional and religious mobilisation provided a platform and prominence in politics. Ethno-religious identities were thus transformed into political ideologies that now competed with the centre for greater space and political control, Tamil nationalism produced the DMK and the Sikhs established the Akali Dal in the Punjab.<sup>27</sup>

These developments altered the political context of India's sub-continental state. In the historic model, the state had retained its autonomy by upholding the extant social order, it had not tried to represent or transform it. The overarching ideology of the historic state transcended but did not replace parochial identities. The interventionist ideology of the post-Independence India, and the plebiscitary democracy it had ushered in, began, however, to undermine the equation between social order and political power. Now, politics became the foremost instrument for social reform, it no longer simply upheld the customary law.

As the regional and ethnic constituencies strengthened, the central state began to lose its ideological and operational autonomy. This weakening of the state inevitably touched off anxieties that have been deeply embedded in the minds of India's elite. They feared that a weak state would lead to a loss of control over India's inherently disintegrative tendencies. The centralisation of power and expansion in the security apparatus, so visible through the 1970s, can be traced, at least partly, to these concerns.

Expansion in the coercive powers of the state could not, however, neutralise the struggle between those who wanted to concentrate power at the apex and those who wanted to wrest control away from the central authority. This was reflected in the conflict between Mrs Gandhi, who represented the state, and Jay Prakash Narayan, who presented the movement for democracy. Mrs Gandhi argued that India's unity was being threatened; Mr Narayan charged that India's democracy was being strangled. Mrs Gandhi responded by suspending the democracy and declaring a national emergency in 1975.<sup>28</sup>

Although the 1977 electoral triumph of the Janata coalition vindicated Jay Prakash Narayan's charges; the return of Mrs Gandhi and the

Congress Party to power in 1980 indicated that the public was equally impressed by her advocacy of a strong state. The Janata party had restored democracy but the factionalism and infighting among its coalition partners once again touched anxieties about national disintegration. The Janata leaders lacked a clear vision and an articulated sense of an overarching order.<sup>29</sup> They also failed to provide coherence and unity. In 1980, the Indian electorate reinstalled the ideology of a strong central state. However, by now India had moved far away from its original design. The growing frustration of ethnic and regional nationalism unleashed by 40 years of plebiscitary democracy could no longer be contained, and led to fresh challenges in the Punjab, Assam, the Northeast and Tamil Nadu.

### **Implications for Foreign Policy: Approaches to South Asia**

Over the years when Nehru, Mrs Gandhi and Janata ruled, two broad approaches in India's regional policies became visible. In one, India's policies were pacific-cooperating, characterised by a readiness to solve mutual problems within a regional framework. The Nehruvian approach, Janata policies during 1977-9 and Rajiv Gandhi's first year in office, and recent policies of the National Front government belong to this genre. In the second, India pursued more status-conscious and controlling policies, characterised by bilateralism and more immediate bonding of policies to power-enhancing objectives. Mrs Gandhi's tenure and most of Rajiv Gandhi's years are identified with the second approach.

It is, however, important to note that both the Janata government and Rajiv Gandhi had insisted on the Simla agreement, and had thereby agreed to a diplomatic framework that clearly favoured India ; Rajiv Gandhi was far more accommodative of Benazir Bhutto, although his Nepal policies could not be regarded as accommodative; while the National Front government withdrew from Sri Lanka and reconciled with most of its neighbours except Pakistan. Confronted with the mounting violence in the Punjab and Kashmir, the Singh government's relations with Pakistan steadily deteriorated.

There are then, enduring continuities that shape and determine India's role in the region. These continuities in India's external policies flow, at least partly, from its sense of fragility as a unified nation state, and from an awareness that its cultural sub-nations are far less committed to the sanctity of its sovereign boundaries. To an extent, then, India's policies – whether they are accommodative or controlling – flow from her desire to ensure the security and stability of the central state.<sup>30</sup>

## WHY IS THERE A CLOSER BONDING OF ETHNICITY TO FOREIGN RELATIONS?

There is, however, an alternative explanation for India's policies in the region, which characterises India as a hegemonic and expansionist power.<sup>31</sup> In this explanation, India's regional dominance is seen as an outcome of two developments: personal; aggrandisement by India's political elite, and a steady expansion in India's military power. In this view, it was the quest for personal power that compelled Mrs Gandhi to weaken India's political institution, destabilise elected opposition governments in federal states, and generally concentrate power in her own hands. Expansion of military and security apparatus naturally followed from these ambitions. It allowed Mrs Gandhi to suppress dissent and retain tight control at home. External threats were invented to justify military expenditures. India's hegemonic ambitions were, in this way, a reflection of her shift towards authoritarianism.

According to the above thesis, undemocratic tendencies at home extend and become hegemonic ambitions abroad. Oppression of ethnic minorities, for instance the conflict in the Punjab, becomes part of the interventionist thrust in Sri Lanka. In the Punjab, the central state seeks to subjugate a small minority to its will; in Sri Lanka, it seeks to subjugate a small country to its geopolitical designs. The Punjab, then, becomes an inner paradigm of India's external policies. The two form a single continuum, the main ideological thrust for which is provided by the expansionist ambitions of India's political elite.

There is a side rider to this thesis. It is often argued that, in the 1980s, Hindu communalism all but preempted the central state. The Hindu Rashtra ideology, it is pointed out, dreams of 'greater India', a nation that would expand its political space to encompass the Hindu population in neighbouring countries, secure Hindu Raj in New Delhi and establish India's unquestioned dominance in the region. India's insistence on preminent status, the advocates of this thesis say, flows from the triumph of the Hindu nationalist over the secular state.

There are several flaws in these arguments. First, until 1984, the Congress Party had opposed and not represented the Rashtra ideology. It had won elections based on support from the schedule castes, women, and India's numerous minority communities. Its platform stressed the secular state, economic development and social justice.<sup>32</sup> Second, the Congress Party, and its leaders, Mrs Gandhi and Rajiv Gandhi, were not solely responsible for the rise of Hindu nationalism – several other parties were more closely identified with communal ideology – rather, they responded

as any political party or actor would to the compelling pressures of electoral politics.<sup>33</sup> A whole range of political entrepreneurs within and outside the formal structures of parties also contributed to the rise of communal consciousness in the 1980s.

Although there are growing instances where the state has accommodated communal demands, particularly since the 1980s, parties espousing Hindu nationalism have yet to capture the central state. For instance, initially, Mrs Gandhi encouraged Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale, a Sikh fundamentalist; but later, she ordered the Army into the Golden Temple to destroy his base. Mrs Gandhi had no intentions of allowing Sikh militants to use the Golden Temple as a base for terrorist activities against the state.<sup>34</sup> Similarly, Rajiv Gandhi openly wooed the Hindu vote during the 1984 elections, but used his massive electoral mandate to sign a pact with Longowal in 1985. In fact, he welcomed the Akali Dal's victory in the Punjab elections that followed.

These shifts in the central state's tactics might be condemned as political opportunism, but these are also desperate attempts by India's central leaders to shore up the state and expand their room for manoeuvre. In the process, they have had to accommodate and absorb at least parts of the ethnic and religious agenda. There is, then, no distinctly Hindu character to the shifts in the state's ideology or the many-sided compromises it has continually made. Although the state has lost its impartiality, the Hindu Rashtra ideology has yet to capture the central state.

The crisis over the Ram Temple in Ayodhya was but the most recent attempt by the central state to protect its independence. The collapse of the V. P. Singh government over this issue, and the deep division over secularism in India, show how participatory democracy can succeed in establishing a majority rule, but majority rule can trample over the principles of secular democracy.

At the end of the 1980s, then, a curious paradox became increasingly visible. The coercive powers of the state had expanded substantially but its political authority, moral claims and impartial image had been eroded. Similarly, India's electorate had expanded but its democracy had become less tolerant and liberal. India was a militarily powerful country but it was no longer able to pursue a foreign policy independent of partisan and ethnically driven interests.

How does a state that is expanding in military power but diminishing in political control behave towards its neighbour? Such a paradoxical state might respond in several different ways: it can assume intimidating postures; make tough statements; even militarily intervene to shore up a failing image; or, it can refrain from involvement. Weakness can render a

state vulnerable to manipulations by votaries of religious and ethnic demands. A state might still maintain its overarching authority but, as its ability to do so diminishes, it might more easily surrender to the demands of ethno-religious groups.

The scenario of political aggrandisement, expanding military power and hegemonic drive advanced by some scholars to explain India's behaviour over the 1970s and 1980s is too simplistic and does not fit the paradox that is India at end of the 1980s. It is more appropriate to argue that India desires influence in the region, an ability to structure relations with, and among, its neighbours; and that such a desire is not devoid of ambitions, but it is propelled by a sense of diminishing control over domestic developments.

#### HOW DO THESE DEVELOPMENTS SHAPE INDIA'S ROLE IN THE REGION?

In South Asia, each state is capable of creating ethnic and religious agitation in the neighbouring state, but only India shares common boundaries or bodies of waters with every state in the subcontinent. For India, the whole of South Asia constitutes a strategic entity. It also constitutes the legitimate perimeter of India's defence. The first objective of India's foreign policy is, then, to protect the country against invasion from without and subversion from within; against external support for secessionist and insurgent movements and foreign interference in its internal affairs. This is why India has opposed intervention in the region by the great powers. These, it is convinced, threaten India's security (i.e., arms to Pakistan) and challenge its claims to preeminence (i.e., India's opposition to superpower presence in the Indian Ocean). India's security concerns are fundamentally regional in scope.<sup>35</sup>

The second objective of India's foreign policy is to maximise its options by becoming self-reliant. India's military expansion enables it to secure these goals. Non-alignment and friendship with the Soviet Union have served India well in this regard. Since the late 1970s, India has sought to diversify its arms sources and expand indigenous capacity for defence production. Third, as a 'rising middle power', India aspires to preeminence in South Asia and a status at least equal to that of China.

The policy of non-alignment, interpreted as a pragmatic policy of independent action, was meant to encompass all three objectives. In the international environment of the Cold War, non-alignment generated for India both power and flexibility in the pursuit of its national interest.

India's policy of non-alignment also had an inner dimension. It allowed India to concentrate on economic development and political integration instead of becoming involved in struggles between the West and the Communist countries. As a weak though large nation, India would have lost some measure of freedom had it aligned itself with any major bloc. In all likelihood, such an alignment would have produced serious political divisions within India.

Thus, non-alignment insulated India's domestic politics from the rifts and tensions of the Cold War. This is evident from the fact that foreign policy has not been a major election issue in any elections since Independence. There was a national consensus on the outlines of the slightly pro-Soviet but mostly non-aligned policy India generally pursued. This consensus on foreign policy also gave the central leaders, whether Nehru, Indira Gandhi or even Rajiv Gandhi, considerable freedom in the conduct of India's relations with other states.

By the 1980s, however, this freedom had clearly eroded. The state was unable to contain ethnic and communal conflicts within its boundaries. This is why India failed to separate conflicts in the Punjab and Kashmir from its relations with Pakistan.<sup>36</sup> Similarly, the central state was unable to fashion the Sri Lanka policy independent of pressures from Tamil nationalists on either side of the Palk Straits.<sup>37</sup>

This author's conversations with I. K. Gujral, the Foreign Minister in the Singh government, indicated that India's initial ambivalence to the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait was guided by fears of domestic repercussions. Anxious not to anger India's 100 million Muslims and the ethnic Keralites, the Singh government opted for a conciliatory approach to Saddam Hussein. This shows that the political weakening of the Indian central state goes well beyond its immediate strategic perimeter.

Several students of Indian politics have suggested that decentralisation of power, and an injection of genuine federalism, might restore balance between the central state and its constituent parts, defuse separatist militancy and allow aspiring local and regional actors constructive avenues for participation. The V. P. Singh government won elections on precisely such a promise. It subscribed to the argument that improved relations with India's neighbouring countries would, in principle, follow from the truly democratic rearrangement of power within India. Peace with India's ethnic nations would bring peace with India's neighbours. Accordingly, the Singh government withdrew its peacekeeping forces from Sri Lanka, offered Colombo a friendship treaty to replace the controversial pact of 1987, and established amicable relations with all the South Asian countries except Pakistan. There, concerns over Kashmir and Punjab

prevented improvement. The agitation over the temple in Ayodhya, however, abruptly brought this experiment to an end.

In India's history, political centres have collapsed not as a result of challenges from any single, narrow-based regional structure, but when the existing subcontinental state has been threatened by the rise of another overarching political ideology. This rhythm of collapse and change is evident in the passage of the Mughals and the rise of the British Raj, the collapse of the British Raj and the rise of the secular nationalists. It is not the agitation in the Punjab or demands for a separate Khalistan that will dislodge the central state in India, but an alternative ideology – one that will unify India's disparate nationalities within a new universal order and give the new order a large popular base – that might destroy the present state of India.

The 'Hindu Rashtra' ideology propagated by a whole range of new and old groups (the BJP, the Hindu Vishwa Parishad, the Shiva Sena) offers such an alternative. It contains a fully articulated design for a new social and political order in the subcontinent. If the Hindu nationalists should succeed in capturing the central state, the territorial and political map of South Asia will, in all likelihood, change once again.

## CONCLUSIONS

As modern India looks back to its past, it automatically turns to the example of the empire and nation states. It is these that have contributed cultural and political substance to the nation of 'India'. In India's political history, power has flowed toward and away from the central state, periods of cohesion have alternated with periods of political disintegration. Pivotal to this ebb and flow of power is the ascendancy of the subcontinent's ethnic and religious nationalities. The subcontinental state has been stable when a balance has existed between the central authority and its constituent parts; instability has prevailed when this balance has been lost. In order to maintain the balance, the central state has had to carve out an exclusive political and ideological space for itself. Such an autonomous space has been critical to the ability of the state to mediate between conflicting claims and to ward off domestic and international threats.

During the first two decades of independence, the Indian state enjoyed such an autonomous space. Expansion of the plebiscitary democracy, and the central state's intervention in the affairs of its federal regions, have, however, steadily eroded the moral authority of the central state and made the votaries of ethnic and religious claims more militant. In other words,



India's liberal state has been undermined not because democracy was scuttled but because it succeeded only too well (although it might have done no more than expand the electoral rolls).

As a consequence, India is unable to pursue a foreign policy that is independent of domestic pressures, particularly those that emanate from its ethnic and religious sub-nations. The prospects of reestablishing the autonomy of the state, its independence and flexibility in foreign policy are, at best, bleak. Whether India remains a subcontinental nation state or fragments into a subcontinent of many nations will depend on the restoration of the historical state model. In the final analysis, the crises in the Punjab and Sri Lanka, Kashmir and Ayodhya are connected by the impact they have on the unity and stability of India.

## NOTES

1. See Lloyd and Susanne Rudolph, 'Subcontinental Empire and the Regional Kingdom in Indian State Formation', in Paul Wallace (ed.), *Region and Nation in India* (New Delhi: Oxford and IBH, 1985); also, see their *In the Pursuit of Laxmi* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1987) pp. 61-8.
2. J. Pandian argues that Tamil civilisation and polity were distinct from the 'Hindu' or Indian civilisation. Each had a separate ethnoepistemology. The 'Dravidian' culture frequently revolted against the Brahminical and Sanskritic authority. He further argues that such antagonism was not limited to the Tamil polity, it occurred in other parts of India as well (*Caste, Nationalism and Ethnicity* (Bombay: Popular Prakashan, 1987) p. 35).
3. Lloyd and Susanne Rudolph, *In the Pursuit of Laxmi*, p. 61.
4. H. N. Sinha, *The Development of Indian Polity* (Bombay: Asian Publishing House, 1962) pp. 239-76, 342-84, 507-54.
5. For a discussion of the Maurya, Gupta and Harshvardhana empires see Charles Drekmeier, *Kingship and Community in Early India* (Stanford, Cal.: Stanford University Press, 1966) pp. 165-88.
6. Ramila Thapar, *A History of India*, vol. I (London: Penguin, 1966) pp. 86-96.
7. For a summary of the imperial ideas as revived by the Mughals, see Percival Spear, 'The Mughals and the British', in A. L. Basham (ed.), *A Cultural History of India* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1975). Also, see Pamela Price, 'Kingly Models in Indian Political Behavior', *Asian Survey*, xxix, no. 6 (June 1989).
8. Percival Spear, 'The British and the Indian State to 1930', in R. J. Moore (ed.), *Tradition and Politics in South Asia* (New Delhi: Vikas Publishing House, 1977) p. 168-9.
9. For a detailed account of the Mandala system and the role of the paramount ruler in early empires, see Drekmeier, *Kingship and Community*, pp. 245-72.

10. Singh Ragubir, *Indian States and the New Regime* (Bombay: Taraporewala, 1938) p. 22.
11. Rajiv Kapoor, *Sikh Separatism* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1986) pp. 71–3.
12. Lloyd and Susanne Rudolph, 'Subcontinental Empire and the Regional Kingdom in Indian State Formation', p. 51; also, see Stanley Wolpert, *A New History of India* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1977) pp. 152–4.
13. Ainslee Embree, *Imagining India: Essays on Indian History* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1989) p. 72. Lord Curzon widened the British sphere of influence by extending the British Empire to Tibet, Afghanistan and Nepal. See Stanley Wolpert, *A New History of India*, p. 171.
14. *Ibid.*, p. 83.
15. *Ibid.*, pp. 83–4.
16. Ainslee Embree argues that the practice of leaving border areas in the hands of tributary chieftains provided defence at small expense, while their ambiguous position made territorial expansion possible; it required no change in the character of the imperial authority. Lord Curzon also pursued a similar strategy, see Stanley Wolpert, *A New History of India*, p. 270.
17. Although for the sake of simplicity only two strains of nationalism are identified here, in reality several lesser strains could be identified. The Hindu nationalist ideas were set forth by Savarkar in his treatise on *Hindutva* which talks about the ancient origins and unity of the Hindu nation. Rajgopalachari represented the intellectual and spiritual strains of Hindu nationalism. Patel, Tandon and Bipin Pal were more politically oriented and rejected Nehru's Westernised, secular nationalism. For a discussion, see Sankar Ghose, *Political Ideas and Movements in India* (Bombay: Allied Publishers, 1975) pp. 171–84.
18. Embree talks about the sultanates of Bijapore and Golconda as examples of distinctive regional kingdoms. The concept of regionalism is, in his view, a modern phenomenon and the debate about conflict between regions and all India civilisation is about a hundred years old. He traces it to writings of Hobson-Jobson and John Strachey, who rejected the idea of India as a unified nation state. The modern nationalists such as Bhandarkar, Bankim Chatterjee and Vivekananda, on the other hand, asserted the cultural and civilisational unity of India. Ainslee Embree, 'Indian Civilization and Regional Cultures: The Two Realities', *Region and Nation in India*, pp. 20–1.
19. The loose federation was conceived in order to allow widest possible freedom to the Muslim-majority provinces in the undivided India. Once the separation of India and Pakistan occurred, the *raison d'être* of this weak federation vanished. Now it was federal form with unitary spirit, a strong, centralised structure and wide powers in the provinces. See Pannikar, *The Foundation of New India* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1963) p. 154.
20. *Ibid.*, pp. 143–63.
21. Rajni Kothari, *Politics in India* (Boston, Mass.: Little Brown, 1970) p. 115.
22. *Ibid.*, pp. 181–91.
23. *Ibid.*, p. 192.

24. Selig Harrison, *India: The Most Dangerous Decades* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1960). There are several studies focusing on the ethnic–linguistic disunity in India, see Myron Weiner (ed.), *State Politics in India* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1976); Paul Brass, *Factional Politics in an Indian State: The Congress Party of Uttar Pradesh* (Berkeley, Cal.: California University Press, 1966).
25. Surjeet Mansingh, *India's Search for Power* (New Delhi: Sage Publications, 1984) p. 213.
26. Paul Brass, *The Politics of India Since Independence* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990) pp. 39–40.
27. Ibid., pp. 79–82.
28. For the discussion of Mrs Gandhi's move toward the centralisation and the personalisation of power, see Stanley Kochanek, 'Mrs Gandhi's Pyramid: the New Congress', in Henry Hart (ed.), *Indira Gandhi's India: A Political System Reappraisal* (Boulder, Col.: Westview, 1976) pp. 93–124; W. H. Morris-Jones, 'India – More Questions than Answers', *Asian Survey*, 14 (August 1984) p. 811.
29. Jyotirindra Das Gupta, 'The Janata Phase: Reorganization and Redirection in Indian Politics', *Asian Survey*, XIX, no. 4 (August 1979) pp. 390–403.
30. For an interesting discussion of India's shift from Nehru's internationalism to Mrs Gandhi's regionalism, see Ashok Kapur, 'The Indian Subcontinent: The Contemporary Structure of Power and the Development of Power Relations', *Asian Survey*, XXVIII, no. 7 (July 1988) pp. 705–10.
31. Leo Rose asserts that India aims at establishing a hegemony in South Asia. See 'Hegemony in South Asia', in J. N. Rosenau, *et al.* (eds), *World Politics* (New York: Free Press, 1976) p. 214.  
Also, see Ross Munro, 'The Awakening of an Asian Power', *Time*, 3 April, 1989.
32. Robert Hardgrave and Stanley Kochanek, *India: Government and Politics in a Developing Nation* (San Diego: Harcourt Brace and Janovich, 1986) p. 224.
33. The Hindu communal parties include the Hindu Mahasabha, and the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh. The Bharatiya Janata Party also incorporates the Hindu Rashtra ideology. Akali Dal speaks for the Sikh communal groups, while the Jamaat-i-Islami represents the Muslim communal consciousness. In addition, there are scores of militant breakaway groups that advocate religious politics of various strains.
34. For a first-hand account of events that eventually led to the assault on the Golden Temple, see Mark Tully and Satish Jacob, *Amritsar: Mrs Gandhi's Last Battle* (London: Rupa, 1985) pp. 107–74.
35. See Robert Hardgrave, 'Linkage Politics in India: the Relationship of Domestic Politics to Foreign Policy', in Robert Scalapino, *et al.* (Berkeley, Cal.: University of California Press, 1988) p. 307.
36. Maya Chadda, 'Domestic Determinants of India's Foreign Policy in the 1980s: The Role of Sikh and Tamil Nationalism', *Journal of South Asian and Middle Eastern Studies*, xi, nos 1 and 2 (Fall–Winter 1987) pp. 21–36.
37. Ibid.

# 11 Regionalism, Ethnic Conflict and Islam in Pakistan: Impact on Foreign Policy

Saleem M. M. Qureshi

The Pakistan of 1947 was the realisation of a dream and a vision. It had secured a free and independent polity for Muslim India after almost two centuries, during which Muslims had been losing power to non-Muslim Hindu and British forces. It was the harbinger of great things to come, perhaps the revival of the glory that Islam had been at one time. But within 24 years its eastern wing, containing the majority of its population, had violently, and through a bloody war, wrenched itself away from the bosom of this Muslim nation. And, as if to stick the knife deeper, separatist movements have thrived among the Sindhis and the Baluchis. The first military dictatorship of General Ayub spawned the separation of East Pakistan and the second, led by General Zia, has injected the even more insidious poison of religious sectarianism, fanaticism and bigotry, pitting sect against sect and region against region. In less than half a century Pakistan has lost more than half of its population and may yet lose its very existence in a class and regional war. Pakistan is not the only new nation to suffer this trauma, many others, such as Nigeria and Sudan, Sri Lanka and even India, have had their share but only Pakistan has suffered the loss of territory and the rejection of its conceptual *raison d'être* by its majority population.

## REGIONALISM AND ETHNICITY IN THE CONTEXT OF NATIONALISM

The fundamental problems relating to Pakistan's survival as a political community and as a state can be traced to its domestic politics, though Pakistan has also had more than its share of externally-generated conflicts. Pakistan is perhaps a very major and outstanding example of the failure of nation-building, an example of what not to do. Pakistan today is more vulnerable to fissiparous and divisive pulls than it was at its birth or during

the first year of its life. The initial enthusiasm and commitment has long departed, the national vision vanished. What have replaced the early euphoria are narrow provincialism, bigoted sectarianism and petty opportunism.

Nationalism, to start with, is not an objective and concrete phenomenon; it is entirely subjective and lives in the emotions and perceptions of those who believe in it. For their belief people make all kinds of sacrifices, as indeed they have done in the past, but the person who makes a sacrifice must believe in the cause for which he may be asked to make that sacrifice. For a nation to call upon its constituents to lay down their lives, the nation must stand for and offer that which the constituents believe to be a superior collective value that validates the willing and voluntary acceptance of individual suffering and destruction. That superior collective value may be the religion of the people, their culture, their language, their tribe, their place of origin or whatever the people believe in. This belief need not be provable to outsiders; what is sufficient is that the insiders believe in it and are committed to its preservation even at the cost of their individual lives and sufferings. All too often the outsiders tend to be objective in their examination of others' beliefs while at the same time insisting upon the subjective assumptions of their own beliefs. Since, for the most part, groups of people have lived side by side, the dichotomy of insider and outsider is a very real one.

What constitutes a nation in the eyes of one person may appear as an empire to another, that is to say, the same conflict may be viewed as between imperialism and nationalism by one, and when seen from the viewpoints of another it could well be between nationalism and parochialism of one variety or another. To search for right and wrong is fruitless because trying to prove that somebody holds a wrong view does not convince that person to give up his view and convert him to his adversaries' view. To call someone a parochialist, provincialist, regionalist, communalist or whatever, because he believes in the survival and continuity of a smaller group with that group's distinct and unique features, is unlikely to convert him to the larger cause, whatever the argument, because the argument is inevitably seen by the partisan of the smaller group as the denial of the distinctiveness of his group. The result is likely to be that the stronger the argument and the confrontation, the stronger the resistance and the opposition. Nation-building is not, and has never been, the process of winning an argument; on the contrary, it is the process of accommodation and of making the dissidents feel comfortable and better protected within the larger group than without. Nationalism and regionalism, therefore, are not two separate phenomena. To paraphrase the

great Iqbal, though in a different context, it is the same reality: seen from one perspective it is nationalism, from another it is regionalism.

To the Indian National Congress it was logical and legitimate to champion Indian nationalism on behalf of the Indian nation, which, to the Congress, was territorially anchored and, being based on secularism, was non-denominational, whereas what the All-India Muslim League advocated was communalism, which was based on 'religious narrowness'. To the Muslim League, in contrast, the Congress was a Hindu organisation, and that fact could not be obliterated by the cooption of a few Muslim politicians. What the Congress advocated was Hindu imperialism, which denied the distinctive culture and identity of the Muslims. The more the Congress leaders argued and tried to prove that the Muslims of India were not, and could not be, a separate nation distinct from other Indians, the more adamant the League leadership became in its efforts to convince Muslims that they were not Hindus, and therefore not Indians, and that if they did not secure a separate state for themselves the Hindus, who had refused to acknowledge their distinctiveness, would absorb them in the Hindu fold, even by forcible conversions; and that those Muslims who disagreed with this interpretation were actually traiters to the Muslim cause. In the end, the Muslim League succeeded in appealing to the Muslimness of the Muslim and, consequently, in the critical elections of 1946 the Muslim League swept the Muslim slate with the few Congress Muslims winning their seats.

Just as the Congress leadership had earlier become mesmerised by its own belief that all Indians belonged to the Indian nation, without ever actually inquiring and examining whether that belief corresponded to reality and whether the concept of the Indian nation was really no more than a notion, but all the time asserting its belief as an established fact; similarly the Pakistan leadership believed that Islam was the glue that bound its adherents in one irrevocable unity, without regard to the cultural, linguistic, even ethnic differences of its constituent components. The advocacy of the preservation of these distinctions: cultural, linguistic and ethnic, became regionalism and provincialism and were condemned as treason to the Islamic Umma of Pakistan. The more the weaker or smaller groups felt insecure the harder they tried to inculcate the sense of this distinctiveness among their constituents, and with equal vigour they were denounced as Indian agents by the central leadership of Pakistan.

The most strident advocacy of regional distinctiveness came from the East Pakistani leadership, and the response of the Karachi Government was to denounce, arrest and imprison Bengali leaders such as Fazlul Huq, Suhrawardy and Mujib. Just as the partition of India had become inevit-

able in 1947, so too did the separation of East Pakistan in 1971. Thus, both Pakistan and Bangladesh are tributes to the short-sightedness, insecurity, lack of accommodation, and doctrinaire and dogmatic espousals of insensitive internal imperialism, though couched they may have been in the rhetoric of nationalism. Nationalism, to be successful, requires voluntary acceptance; it cannot be achieved through assertive coercion. Nation-building, therefore, requires accommodation of the fears and apprehensions and of the feeling of insecurity of the weaker and minority groups, not compulsion, forcing minorities to lose their identity.

#### THE ASSUMPTIONS OF THE LEADERS: JINNAH'S CONCEPTUALISATIONS OF THE TWO-NATION THEORY AND OF ISLAMIC IDEOLOGY

Just as the demand for Pakistan was novel, so were the conceptual and philosophical bases on which it was going to be anchored. As the supreme leader of the Pakistan Movement, Jinnah articulated the two-nation theory, providing the basis for separating Muslims from other Indians, mainly Hindus, on the grounds that they were separate and distinct by virtue of having their own complete code of life and a distinct value system. While the two-nation theory was lacking in the evidence that it offered, it amply made up that deficiency by opening up vistas of a very attractive Pakistan. The theory responded to Muslim fears of the Hindus, with regard to both their superior numbers and also their superior skills. The theory implied that, once achieved, Pakistan would be the nation of the Muslims and there would be no Hindu landlords, money-lenders, industrialists, intellectuals or clerks, and the Muslims would not need to compete against the better qualified Hindus in a Muslim Pakistan. The Islamic ideology was articulated to argue that Islam was a complete code of life; that it provided answers for every problem and endeavour in life; that somehow it contained a complete blueprint not only for matters devotional but also for social, economic and political matters. The Islamic ideology also implied links with the Muslim heartlands and inspirational origins, as well as the glory that the world of Islam had been at one time.

The picture of a future Pakistan that these conceptualisations projected was very attractive and appealing to most Muslims. Those few Muslims who might have wanted to examine the details emanating from these ideological enunciations were prevented from doing so lest they should inadvertently fall victim to the Hindu design of questioning the foundation of Muslim solidarity. Muslims could not be allowed to indulge in squabbles

among themselves because the danger of their falling into the large Hindu quagmire was so near. In order to keep the reins of Muslim solidarity in his own hands Jinnah coined his famous slogan of 'Unity, Faith and Discipline'. Obviously, what unity, faith and discipline called upon the Muslims to do was to speak with one voice – the voice of Jinnah himself. Any Muslim leader or organisation that had any doubt about faith in this unity under the discipline imposed by Jinnah had either to be converted or to be ostracised. Whenever Jinnah was asked what kind of government the future Pakistan would have, whether democratic or theocratic, Mr Jinnah's answer was, 'We learnt democracy thirteen centuries ago.'<sup>1</sup>

Muslims have a tendency to invent history to suit their view of current needs. They cast historical events and personages in such a way that contemporary affairs or personalities will be legitimised by being linked with the past. Thus, from the Prophet on down through the great religious personages, great political leaders have come to be endowed with superhuman, almost mythical powers. Not only was Jinnah not going to be an exception, he as Creator of Pakistan, had to be endowed with not only the sagacity of the *Khulafai Rashidun* but also their piety. Thus Jinnah became the *Qaid-i-Azam*, the Great Leader. Jinnah was a thoroughly secular and this-worldly man, a completely eclectic individual for whom there were no dietary taboos. It is ironic that a state which sought its legitimacy from, and endeavoured to build its identity on, assumptions derived from Islam, should have as its founder a leader whose life, personality and character were so unreligious. As the Islamic fervour and demands for Islamic constitution, state, and economics increased, so did the insecurity of the Governments of Pakistan. Consequently, successive governments, whether implicitly or explicitly, prevented a critical examination of Jinnah's personality and politics.<sup>2</sup>

Unfortunately for Pakistanis, there were hardly any intellectual giants among their founding fathers. Not being intellectual giants was neither their fault nor their shortcoming. They belonged to their generation and were representatives of what their society was. As an exception, the great poet Iqbal was an Islamic visionary and a very appealing articulator, through his poetry, of the inner yearnings of the Muslims of India. He sensitised the educated Muslims to the plight of their co-religionists and formulated a concept and a vision which, if implemented, had the potential of achieving great benefits for Muslims as well as of rebuilding their self-confidence and self-esteem. Iqbal's address to the annual session of the All India Muslim League at Allahabad, in 1930,<sup>3</sup> is the most famous of his conceptualisations dealing with this issue. His most progressive thought dealing with the implementation of Islamic values in a political context is



contained in his lectures on the reconstruction of Islamic thought, delivered at Madras in 1923.<sup>4</sup> But Iqbal was neither a political scientist nor a constitutional craftsman and it was unrealistic to expect him to lay down a complete blueprint for the Islamic polity that he had advocated. It was equally unrealistic, but also misleading, to assume that what Iqbal had articulated was a complete scheme, ready made for implementation.

Also, it was unrealistic to attribute philosophical and political completeness to the idea of Pakistan as presented in Jinnah's speeches<sup>5</sup> (since he wrote almost nothing), which were essentially political, mobilising the Muslim masses and articulating the Muslim interests as Jinnah understood them. Jinnah was not the intellectual giant that he was made out to be, not a deep thinker, and certainly no philosopher, political or otherwise. This is neither a criticism of Jinnah nor an attempt to lower the pedestal on which he was placed; he never claimed to be what he was not, and he would have been horrified at the religious eulogies that a devoted but ignorant following was eager to bestow upon him. Jinnah was a lawyer, a debator, a politician and political leader, and a practical man, totally honest and dedicated to his cause and totally free of any personal scandal. He was a political leader and as a political articulator he belonged to the category of the very great. He dealt with the present as he perceived it, but he could not provide for a future that he was unable to visualise. He knew little or nothing about either Islam as a religion or Islam as a civilisation. Not knowing about either of them was neither a sin nor a particular obstacle to his leadership. He reacted to political challenges as well as he could, and in the end he achieved for the Muslims the state of Pakistan. This provided them with a foundation on which they could build a new state which would reflect their self-esteem. By shutting off critical debate about the conceptual foundations of Pakistan and the capacity of Islam as a religion to provide political underpinnings for a state, the Government of Pakistan committed a grievous mistake and delivered a blow to the process of nation-building.

Pakistan had been achieved; whether Jinnah was a pious religious saint or a holy Islamic warrior or simply twentieth-century politician, and whether the 'two-nation theory' and 'Islamic ideology' were appropriate to anchor the infant Pakistan or were only an illusion, these issues were no longer relevant. Pakistan was a political reality, recognised by the world, including India, and was a member of the United Nations; it did not need to weave these conceptual, religious and historical ambiguities in the fabric of its body politic. A critical examination of what could provide a practical and meaningful basis for nation-building in Pakistan, would have been far more fruitful than the senseless insistence on the acceptance of the leaders' as if they were absolute truths revealed by the Almighty,

eternally binding and capable of producing positive and desirable results if the followers could be imbued with faith and unwavering dedication.

## PROBLEMS OF NATION-BUILDING

Pakistan is not unique in having problems of nation-building. Most new states in Asia and Africa are beset with these problems. Pakistan is not unique in being one where secession has succeeded. The nationalist fervour in East Pakistan became so consuming that its votaries faced an army and made sacrifices that perhaps exceeded even those made in 1947. In the new Pakistan sub-nationalism has been denigrated as 'regionalism', a nationalism that is conceptually shared only by the people of one region and is anathema to others. Evidently, Pakistanis have forgotten that their own 'nationalism' had been branded 'communalism' by the majority Hindu community, and that the majority paid the price of partition for their insensitivity and inability to comprehend and appreciate the concerns and fears of the weaker community.

Nation-building in the contemporary world has been the major failure in the new states that have emerged since the end of the Second World War. Partly because of the complicated heterogeneity and conflictual history of their populations, but more so because of the inability of the ruling elites to rationally consider the available policy options, the process of nation-building has suffered major setbacks, causing more regression in tolerance and accommodation now than was the case at the time of independence.

Ultimately a nation is a community of wills, and will is a voluntary, attitudinal phenomenon. A community of wills means that the in-groups must have a sense of participation in collective affairs and of belonging together. What will make people believe that they belong together? On an individual level, this belief cannot be separated from the sense of security of life and property. Collectively, the sense of security relates to the distinctive personality of the group: religion, culture and language, or some other values. The members of the group must share and believe in the supra-individual sanctity of these values and consider them worthy of sacrifice. Being a matter of belief, the identity of a nation has to be cultivated and promoted. The identity cannot be imposed, and the imposition by administrative fiat cannot succeed if it negates the primordial and primary identification of the people.

Whatever the individuals have learned to identify with at the subconscious level must be incorporated in the larger identity in order to build a

nation which includes several groups. Perception of loss of identity arouses almost the same defence mechanism as a threat to one's life. Often the nation-building attempts by the ruling elites emphasise the larger, state-approximating identity, in opposition to the smaller, group identities, and explicitly or implicitly they demand or are perceived to demand the disavowal and rejection of the individual's primary identity, which the individual has inherited from his forefather. When the survival of the group and its identity is perceived to be at stake, it is not a change of government that is sought but the destruction of the state that appears to threaten the group distinctiveness.

Muslims in pre-1947 India could not have cared less for the unity of India because they were convinced that Islam was in danger in a united India. Similarly, in Pakistan, the Bengalis sought the destruction of United Pakistan so that their Bengali culture would not be jeopardised in Pakistan. Not denial but acceptance, not rejection but accommodation of the group's distinctiveness, is the recipe for nation-building. Primary identity is much too powerful and since time does not erode its validity it is only practical to acknowledge its relevance and work at its integration in the larger fabric of the nation.

## SECULARISM AS A NATION-BUILDING STRATEGY

Secularism originated not as a nation-building device but as an evasive strategy by an exposed, weak and vulnerable minority. Its main objective was to assure the state that the new group, practising a different way of life, was not subversive of the state authority. Its development and elaboration in recent times in the countries of Western Europe had anti-clerical and anti-church motivations. Secularism was not a device for the integration of primordial heterogeneities. It operated in an exclusively Christian background and its primary purpose was to separate two similar movements from competing and injuring each other. Religion and politics both sought to regulate and control the behaviour of large numbers of people through elaborate rules. The violation of the rules and regulations led to penalties here, in politics, and in the hereafter, in religion.

Secularism had more success in Christian societies because it dealt with the same group, it did not seek to integrate or accommodate heterogeneous groups, rather, it sought to accommodate two parallel movements by conferring control on the same group of people by dividing linear life into two stages. The fundamental identity of the group as a Christian group was neither challenged nor did it need to accommodate itself to the

demands of non-Christian groups, whose views of the deity, sin, heaven and hell could be at a total dissonance.

Secularism as a device to integrate discordant groups has not worked, and it is not likely to work in the future. The way of life of the majority group, regardless of its modification by interaction with other groups, constitutes the mainstream. The pressure is always applied to the minority, for the minority is expected to move closer to the mainstream – away from its own distinctive particularities. This constitutes the litmus test of the minority's commitment to secularism. Hardly ever is the same demand made of the majority, forcing it to give up its distinctive particularities and move closer to the ways of the minority. Consequently, the greater the emphasis on secularism in a multigroup state the greater the demand on the minorities to give up their cultural particularities. When this demand is increased in intensity, the resistance of the minorities also solidifies in opposition.

In today's state system there is no new state and no multigroup society which can be held up as a secularism-success scenario for nation-building. Wherever group resentments are deep the conflicts either continue or periodically flare up. The Catholic-Protestant blood-letting in Northern Ireland illustrates that even in a wholly Christian society, divided only along sectarian lines, the intensity of political passions can create an unbridgeable gulf; and secularism becomes only a euphemism for majority dominance. More than four decades after independence, and the adoption of secularism as the fundamental nation-building strategy, India is more divided and fractured than it has ever been in recent history. There is no evidence to suggest that secularism can be effectively used as a nation-building strategy.

## ISLAM AND NATION-BUILDING: THE APPLICATION OF A CONVOLUTED IDEOLOGY

Those who yoked Islam to ideology understood neither Islam nor ideology. An ideology is a scheme of life intended for organising worldly affairs and is based upon or derived from human experience. Islam contains God's commands whose primary purpose is the establishment of an ethical society. In this perspective the Prophet Muhammad interpreted his mission. The Prophet commanded his fellow Arabs to Islam and as a result he created a community united on the basis of its commitment to Islam, the Islamic Umma.

Much has been made in modern historical writing about Muhammad's dual roles as prophet and as chief magistrate, but no evidence is available about the worldly office of the Prophet. The most authentic record of the

Prophet's life and work is the Quran. The histories of his period were produced later, none were contemporaneous. The Quran designates Muhammad as Messenger and Prophet and emphasises his mortal humanity, without referring to any other office or function attributed to the Prophet. That is why the Quran is silent about succession, because succession relates to an office. The Prophet Muhammad was the last Messenger, and the message was going to be completed through Muhammad, there was no need for a successor. The Quran is generally thorough and even detailed on matters requiring detailed explanation. For example, on the issue of inheritance the Quran is so detailed that all permutations and combinations of relatives having the right of inheritance have been laid out fully and unambiguously.

The distinction between the Prophet Muhammad's role as the receiver of Divine Revelation and Muhammad the mortal human was never lost sight of by his contemporaries. Thus, in preparation for the Battle of the Ditch, where the Prophet proffered his view of how to organise the defence, his close associates did question him as to whether the particular view he held was God's revelation or his own thinking. When the Prophet acknowledged that it was his own view, he was told that they would not accept it for they had better plans. Muslim historians, later on, obliterated the distinction between Muhammad the historical man and Muhammad the Prophet. The later historians and theologians created the image of a Muhammad who personified the sublime of the metaphysical as well as the mundane. In the same way they transformed the 'perfect' religion into a totalitarian religion.

The notion of politics has almost always been alien to Muslim writers. The early Arab theologians did not conceptualise politics or produce political theory.<sup>6</sup> They dealt with kingship in the form in which they had experienced it, and that was *khilafa* or *imama*.<sup>7</sup> The Quran does not concern itself with politics, government or state laws. Consequently, there is no Quranic basis for the assertion that in Islam religion and politics are fused and that Islam is a complete code of life. The fusion of religion and politics is Iranian, not Islamic, it comes not from the Quran but from the *Testament of Ardashir* and the *Letter of Tansar*, both having been translated into Arabic by Ibn al Muqaffa. The *Testament of Ardashir* attributes to Ardashir the saying

Religion and kingship are two brothers, and neither can dispense with the other. Religion is the foundation of kingship, and kingship protects religion. For whatever lacks a foundation must perish, and whatever lacks a protector disappears.<sup>8</sup>

The Quran does not assert that Islam is a complete code of life or that it contains provisions for every eventuality of life. The Meccan Suras, which are the earlier ones, paint a broad picture of ethical life, seldom dealing with specific and concrete acts. The later, Medinan Suras, deal with matters the Prophet confronted, and therefore have more specific content relating to the needs of Muslims as Muslims, but reflect the same Meccan Sura ethics. The oft-quoted verse: 'This day have I perfected your religion' is not a verse that stands by itself.<sup>9</sup> The full verse deals with dietary regulations, it starts with them and ends with them, and in the middle is included this part dealing with perfect religion. It need not be stretched to mean that Islam is a complete code of life and that the Quran has provided for every eventuality. Of the same order is the verse dealing with multiple marriages, which actually forms part of the admonition to do justice and be fair in dealing with orphans and their property.<sup>10</sup> The edifice thus built, of a totalitarian religion, is the product of Muslim desire to establish divine authority behind every human action. It does not appear to be God's, the Quran's or the Prophet's design and intent.

The major problem for Pakistan, as a result, arose from the attempt to utilise an insufficient conceptual plan to provide the philosophical underpinning for a state that had no historical precedent. Since Islam was declared to be the mainspring for all conceptualisations to regulate Pakistan, the transformation of the heterogeneous population of Pakistan into a nation had to be undertaken within the context of Islam. Pakistanis confronted a dilemma in their 'Islamic' languages, i.e., Urdu, Persian Farsi and Arabic. They do not have a word to correspond to the Western concept of nation. The Quran uses several terms but they all relate essentially to tribes and religious groups because in the days of the Prophet social organisations were based on ancestry and relation to God, and excluded all those whose ancestors and gods were different. The modern concept of nation, derived from territory, was almost a millennium in the future. Pakistanis, at their state's birth, had some familiarity with the concept of nation, which was territorial rather than confessional.

Yet, the leadership of Pakistan, while familiar with modern nationalism, opted to reject it in favour of a paradigm which might have existed in antiquity. Thus they ensured that Pakistan would take a long and painful path to sort out the issue of modern nationalism. However, the Founder of Pakistan, Jinnah, did make an effort to apply the imperatives of modern nationalism in his foundation speech to the Constituent Assembly of Pakistan on 11 August 1947.<sup>11</sup>

Islam, if it was to be the *raison d'être* of Pakistan, needed rethinking and Islamic thought needed reformulation on the lines indicated by the great Iqbal in the 1920s,<sup>12</sup> or the late Professor Fazlur Rahman in the 1980s.<sup>13</sup> Islam was allowed to fall into the hands of the most retrograde elements among Muslims, who had historically lived off Islam and had exploited Islam to tolerate the injustice and oppression of the feudal establishment and the professional class of religious functionaries. Theirs was the Islam of the past, not a historical past, but a past especially created by the votaries of their classes, which emphasised tradition and the status quo. In the name of Islamic purity, they attempted to impose an intellectual straitjacket on the creativity of the Muslim mind.

The leaders of the Pakistan movement were by no means Islamists, but they had used Islamic symbols to mobilise the Muslims. After Jinnah's death in 1948, the Pakistan leadership had no individuals of moral or intellectual fibre or political sagacity who could put the long-range welfare of Pakistan ahead of their immediate political needs. Consequently, the leadership became bogged down in the everyday problems of ruling and administering, leaving Islam to those who were most adept in manipulating Islamic images, symbols and rituals. Islam, in the hands of these professional Islamists, has incrementally moved towards an inward and backward looking exclusiveness.

The ledger of minorities in Pakistan had been very considerably reduced by the civil war of 1946–7 and, therefore, Islam was called upon to deal only with Muslims. The first attempt at constitution-making revealed a pathetic commitment to Islam, and the Islamists' limited understanding of the political role of Islam. They were unable to produce a new blueprint of an Islamic constitution or to retrieve an old one, if one existed. However, in their zeal to justify their exclusive claim to Islam, and Islam's claim to Pakistan, they spawned an un-Islamic trend in Pakistan's political culture. The Islamists singled out the vulnerable and defenceless Muslim community of the Ahmadis (Qadianis) and almost brought down the Government of Pakistan in their quest to expel the Ahmadis from the pale of Islam.<sup>14</sup> By a hair's breadth they failed in that objective, but in the process they sowed the seeds of the most destructive trend of setting province against province and region against region.

One of the fallouts of this anti-Ahmadi controversy was the heating up of the Punjabi-Bengali competition for regional power in constitution-making. The dismissal of a Punjabi Chief Minister by a Bengali Prime Minister was followed by the dismissal of that Bengali Prime Minister by

the Punjabi Governor General. These dismissals and what followed within the next five years destroyed the 'constitutional', 'democratic' governmental process, however, flawed that may have been. The West Pakistani Islamists and their supporters in the Central Government and bureaucracy vowed not to permit the 'Hinduised Muslims' of East Pakistan ever to acquire control over the levers of power in Pakistan. The result of this policy appeared in the form of the Bangladesh movement, which could only be suppressed by the violent use of the Pakistani Army. The emergence of Bangladesh was thus assured when Muslim soldiers killed fellow Muslims and Pakistanis.

Soon after the birth of Bangladesh, the anti-Ahmadi controversy resurfaced and the demand for their exclusion was raised once again. This time the Islamic exclusionists succeeded in forcing a Westernised and secularised Zulfikar Ali Bhutto to do their bidding. The Ahmadis were declared non-Muslim by an Act of the secular legislature of Pakistan, despite the Ahmadis' repeated Islamic protestations and commitment to the Islam of Prophet Muhammad. This was an entirely unprecedented development in the history of Islam, a development which the erudite Muslim scholars would find contrary to the historical spirit of Islam. The Sunni principle, Gibb wrote, has been 'to extend the limits of toleration as widely as possible,' and

No great religious community has ever possessed more fully the catholic spirit or has been more ready to allow the widest freedom to its members provided that they accept, at least outwardly, the minimum obligations of the faith. It would not be to go too far beyond the bounds of truth to say, in fact, that no body or religious sectaries has ever been excluded for the orthodox Islamic community but those who desire such an exclusion and as it were excluded themselves.<sup>15</sup>

The persecution of Ahmadis became virulent under General Zia ul-Haq, who made this group of Muslims the special victim of his 'Islamisation'.

Zia's policy to totally Islamise Pakistan was a transparent attempt at securing political legitimacy for his regime, which came to power through usurpation and breach of the Constitution. It then hung on to power through false promises and lies, and opened a Pandora's box of religious and political problems. With the introduction of these laws it turned out that the Shia were a different kind of Muslims.<sup>16</sup> The Shia-Sunni controversy reached its height in 1987, to the extent that the Shia translations of the Quran were burned in several places and the orthodox Sunni ulema demanded the establishment in Pakistan of a Sunni-Hanafi



state excluding all non-Hanafi sects. The evidence laws that the Zia government wanted to be enacted would have reduced a woman to one half of a man, and the protests of women proved of no avail.

The potential of Islam for the purpose of nation-building may also be examined in the contexts of Islam as a concept and Islam as a historical process. As a concept, Islam, like any other religion, brings together the believers while, at the same time, separating them from non-believers. In a state where nationality is Islam-derived, non-Muslims will belong to a separate category. This is what actually happened in Muslim states of the early and medieval era when the non-Muslims were made *dhimmis* (the protected class), which was equated with an inferior status for the non-Muslim.

Examined historically, the world of Islam has shown an irreversible tendency towards bifurcations and fractures in the community of believers. No sooner had the Prophet died than Muslims divided themselves into three parties: the Traditionists, comprising the *Sahaba* (the Prophet's associates) and including both the *Muhajir* (migrants) and the *Ansar* (helpers); the aristocrats of the Prophet's tribe Quraish, with Umayya as their principal family; and the Legitimists, who supported Ali. There were claims and counterclaims on behalf of each contender; and their articulators were the pious theologian-jurists. Those political events had a very profound impact on the direction Islam took, while it must be remembered that the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad were primarily related to social and ethical matters rather than dealing with issues of political power. However, the actual historical environment<sup>17</sup> of the Prophet's Arabia was permeated with tribal mores and it was unlikely that tribal ways would be completely overshadowed by the universalising impulses of the Prophet's message. As it happened, the assassination of the third Caliph, Uthman, provoked an inter-tribal civil war, indicating that the tribal interpretation of Islam and the Arab community contained seeds of disruption, threatening the principle of unity.<sup>18</sup>

The principle of unity, rent asunder by the conflict between the House of Ali and the Umayyads, has never been put together again. With the expansion of Muslim conquests and conversions, an increasing number of Muslim polities have come into existence, and often made war on each other. Even in the case of India, after the initial Muslim invasions which were directed against the Hindus, the subsequent conquerors all fought and replaced fellow Muslim rulers. The political history of Muslims, thus, from the death of the Prophet onwards, is one of conflict, war and conquest. It is ironic that Muslims still insist on pressing Islam into the

service of nation-building, ignoring their own history and overlooking the failure of Islam to achieve political unity.

Islamic scholars like al-Ghazali (AD 1111) and Ibn Jama's (AD 1294) went to the extreme limit in rationalising, legalising and sanctifying naked force as an instrument of political legitimacy on the grounds that it was necessary to maintain unity, peace and order. The higher objectives which eminent Islamic theologians imposed upon the political-office bearers were concerned more with the prevention of anarchy by emphasising order rather than with the maintenance of 'right', which might have had a better chance to bring people together. Obviously, order rather than unity seems to be the political objective emphasised by Islamic theologians.

This analysis is not intended to belittle Islam or minimise its role in the development of one of the most glorious civilisations in the history of the world. However, it has to be understood that the role of religion in human endeavours is essentially a social phenomenon and has no supra-human existence. This is another way of saying that a religion plays the role in human society that its votaries want it to play. Clearly, Islam has played the role in history which Muslims have made it to play. If Muslims had desired Islam to be an instrument of unity and nation-building it could have performed that role. However, this political role would have required Muslims to accommodate all those Muslims whose theological views were different, and to adopt public policies which would have attracted non-Muslims to identify with an Islamic state.

#### WHAT DOES PAKISTAN'S EXPERIENCE WITH NATION-BUILDING POINT TO?

The very obvious points that can be identified in Pakistan's attempts at nation-building are:

- (1) that religion does not provide a basis for a modern nation;
- (2) that the division of the polity into two units will always generate competition, not cooperation; and
- (3) that military/authoritarian rule prevents the process of integrative interaction which is ultimately based on power-sharing and the development of accommodative, bargaining and conflict-resolution skills, both in individuals and in institutions.

On the positive side, it can be argued that nation-building is likely to be greatly facilitated if:

- (1) an overarching supra-regional, supra-sectarian, national elite emerges;
- (2) the peculiarities and particularities, as well as the aspirations, of various groups are accommodated; and
- (3) the central or ruling elite deals with smaller or weaker groups, and especially those concentrated on the periphery, on the assumption that their commitment to the polity is on a par with that of the majority or the dominant group.

However, it seems that in Pakistan no lesson has been learned from the secession of East Pakistan; very little appreciation has developed for the cultural particularities of various communities. Instead of an accommodative approach in public policies, relations have been exacerbated, bringing certain regions of Pakistan to a level of almost constant civil war. There have been several insurgencies in the Frontier Province and Baluchistan, and the Sindh secessionist movement has remained a thorn in the side of most Pakistani governments, including those which were dominated by the Sindhi leadership.

## IMPACT ON FOREIGN POLICY

The foreign policy of a state usually reflects its domestic policy. The conceptual foundations of Pakistan, the two-nation theory and the Islamic ideology, implied that somehow it would derive its moorings from Islam. Thus, one level, the constant factor in Pakistan's foreign policy has been its antipodal stance to that of India. Moreover, Pakistan has identified itself with the Muslim states in the Middle East and endeavoured to secure benefits from that identification. To a certain extent Pakistan has obtained some concrete advantage from both.

Pakistan's relationship with China has been beneficial in that, as a regional counterweight to India, the Chinese support has enabled Pakistan to ward off Indian regional hegemony and preserve Pakistan's freedom of action. Initially, Pakistan's Islamic overtures were rebuffed by powerful Muslim countries like Egypt and Turkey, but with the reversal of economic fortunes of the Muslim countries in the wake of the 1973 Arab-Israeli war and the rise in oil prices, Pakistan has benefited economically from a close relationship with the Arab oil-producing states.

The real division in the world today is between the technologically advanced states and the less developed countries. Economic and political power in various states is in direct proportion to their scientific and technological capacity. Both China and the Muslim states are consumers

of technology and not generators of scientific innovations and advanced technology. This situation fosters Pakistan's dependence on the technologically advanced Western states.

In spite of a long-standing relationship with the United States, which has most to offer in terms of technology and financial resources, this relationship has been unstable and Pakistan has not been able to derive the full benefits which it could have had. Pakistan's anti-Indian preoccupation has had no echo in the United States for the simple reason that, in Washington's perspective, India is eight times larger than Pakistan, it has democratic and secular politics with which the US can identify more easily than with Pakistan's Islam-oriented and autocratic politics.

Pakistan's Islamic identification has led Pakistan to align itself closely with the Palestinian cause in the Middle East and take a very strong anti-Israeli stand. The Islamic component has generated a latent anti-Western psychology in Pakistan. With very little provocation Pakistanis can be aroused to vent their anti-Western feelings and become anti-American.

As a Muslim society Pakistan's culture was a rather conservative one, but, since Islamisation has been intensified, that conservatism has made Pakistan an almost closed society with which Westerners, including Americans, can hardly identify. Few American scholars or journalists care to cover or study Pakistan.<sup>19</sup>

Consequently, when foreign aid for Pakistan is under consideration in the US Congress, there is virtually no Pakistani lobby, no important American scholars or famous journalists to speak for Pakistan or advocate Pakistan's cause. On the contrary, there are numerous Indophiles and friends of Israel within the American intellectual community who are eager to volunteer their expert service and advice about the dangers of the American aid to Pakistan either for India or for Israel or both.

The long-term authoritarian rule in Pakistan has inflicted an almost mortal injury to the development of a Pakistani intellectual community which could develop academic links with its American counterpart. The Ayub regime made it impossible for Pakistani scholars to critically examine subjects of fundamental concern to Pakistan, because they impinged on his own government and its legitimacy. The Zia regime explicitly prohibited any criticism of the Islamic ideology and the ideology of Pakistan, or any examination of the personality of Jinnah. These policies have dried out the fountain of scholarship in Pakistan, making it almost an intellectual desert. No wonder Western scholars find the study of Pakistan an unappealing proposition.

A fallout of this image of Pakistan in the United States can be seen in the lack of economic and business interest. Pakistani economists lament

that in spite of long and close military relations between their country and the United States, and in spite of Pakistan having become the fourth highest recipient of US foreign aid during the 1980s, the level of US economic interest and investment in Pakistan has remained abysmally low. American private-sector investment, technology transfer and trade, etc. have remained woefully insignificant.

## NOTES

1. Rafique Afzal, *Selected Speeches and Statements of the Quaid-i-Azam Ali Jinnah (1911–34 and 1947–48)* (Lahore: Research Society of Pakistan, University of the Punjab, 1966) p. 423.
2. See the author's chapter 'Iqbal and Jinnah: Personalities, Perceptions and Politics', in Saleem M. M. Qureshi, *The Politics of Jinnah* (Karachi: Royal Book Academy, 1988).
3. See the text in A. R. Tariq, *Speeches and Statements of Iqbal* (Lahore: Sh. Ghulam Ali and Sons, 1973) pp. 3–33, particularly pp. 11–12. For a more detailed discussion of the evolution and development of Muslim nationalism, see Hafeez Malik, *Muslim Nationalism in India and Pakistan* (Washington, DC: Public Affairs Press, Dec 1963).
4. Allama Muhammad Iqbal, *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam* (Lahore: Ashraf, 1982, reprint).
5. Jamiluddin Ahmad, *Speeches and Writings of Mr Jinnah*, 7th edition (Lahore: Ashraf, 1968).
6. A. K. S. Lambton, 'Islamic Political Thought', in Joseph Schacht and C. E. Bosworth, *The Legacy of Islam*, 2nd edn (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979) pp. 404–24.
7. Qamaruddin Khan, *Al Mawardi's Theory of the State* (Lahore: Islamic Book Foundation, 1983).
8. A. K. S. Lambton, *State and Government in Medieval Islam* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981, rep. 1985) p. 45.
9. Quran, 5:3. This is one of the last verses revealed in the Prophet's life, for the Prophet died about 81 days after its revelation.
10. Quran, 4:3.
11. *Quaid-i-Azam Mahomed Ali Jinnah, Speeches as Governor General of Pakistan 1947–48* (Karachi: Pakistan Publications, n.d.) pp. 8–9.
12. Allama Muhammad Iqbal, *The Reconstruction of Religious Thoughts in Islam*. About Iqbal and his lectures, Gibb wrote in *Modern Trends in Islam* (Beirut: Librairie Du Liban, reprinted, 1975): 'Iqbal is perhaps the most interesting figure in the whole modern Islamic community, but also intellectually the most elusive' (p. 59). Iqbal's six lectures regarding the reconstruction of religious thought in Islam, 'present the first (and so far the only) thorough going attempt to restate the theology of Islam in modern immanentist terms' (p. 60). And 'to the conservative Muslim' Iqbal's thought 'must seem a production of breathtaking audacity; and, though it

has strongly influenced the younger intellectuals of India, I cannot think it has yet had any deep effect upon Muslim thought as a whole. Indeed, had it not been for Iqbal's prestige as a poet and leader in Indian Islam, it is doubtful whether so revolutionary and heretical work could ever have been published' (p. 81).

13. Fazlur Rahman, *Islam and Modernity: Transformation of an Intellectual Tradition* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1982).
14. For details see the *Report of the Court of Inquiry Constituted under Punjab Act II of 1954 to Inquire into the Punjab Disturbances of 1953* (Lahore: Superintendent, Government Printing, Punjab, 1954).
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16. See the author's 'The Politics of the Shia Minority in Pakistan: Context and Development', in D. Vajpeyi and Y. Malik (eds), *Religious and Ethnic Minority Politics in South Asia* (New Delhi: Manohar, 1989) pp. 109–38.
17. H. A. R. Gibb, *Civilization of Islam* (London: Routledge, 1962) p. 5.
18. See the author's 'Political Community and Religious Pluralism in the Middle East: An Islamic Perspective', *Middle East Focus*, vol. 12, no. 2 (Summer/Fall 1990).
19. See Ralph Braibanti's lament on the paucity of research undertaken by the Americans on Pakistan in his 'The Research Potential of Pakistan's Development', in L. Ziring, R. Braibanti and W. H. Higgins (eds), *Pakistan: The Long View* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1977).

# 12 India–Pakistan Relations: an Appraisal for Rapprochement

Javid Iqbal

Discussion on India–Pakistan relations usually commences with the question: Where does one begin? Attitudes on both sides are extremely polarised, then how can one offer a variety of options for these intricate and complex relations?

Hindu and Muslim communities have always respected each other's prominent leaders who made sacrifices and even laid down their lives in the struggle for freedom. Both have been influenced by each other's culture and have always admired each other's literature, music, fine arts and architecture. Yet both distrust and bear grudges against each other because of religious and social differences, or economic, commercial and political rivalry. This love–hate relationship has continued for centuries and is a legacy of the past for the modern Hindu and Muslim.

Ever since the introduction of the democratic principle in the sub-continent in the early twentieth century, the Muslims have maintained a defensive posture. Their insistence on separate electorates, the Lucknow Pact, the demands for bringing Muslim majorities into power in the Punjab and Bengal, the extension of constitutional reforms to Northwest Frontier Province and Baluchistan, the separation of Sindh from the Bombay Presidency, the Fourteen Points of Jinnah, Iqbal's Allahabad Address, and finally the Lahore Resolution, are all manifestations of the same collective frame of mind.

However, it should be understood that although the Muslims wanted safeguards in the provinces where they were in minorities and full autonomy in the regions of the subcontinent where they constituted majorities, they also wanted to coexist with the Hindus. It is evident that, so far as the centre was concerned, the Lahore Resolution (1940) like Iqbal's Allahabad Address (1930), had kept the door open for negotiations, and it was against this background that Jinnah and the Muslim League Council were prepared to accept the Cabinet Mission Plan of 1946, the last hope for a single Indian Union to emerge in the wake of the British Raj.

But the plan was scuttled, and the partition of the subcontinent was agreed upon, leading to the emergence of two fully independent and sovereign states of India and Pakistan, along with the legacy, one may say, of mutual love-hate and distrust.

The territorial dispute between the two countries relates to two different, and diametrically opposed, perceptions of what has been called the problem of Kashmir.

The State of Jammu and Kashmir, a Muslim-majority territorial unit, was sold by the British to the Dogra rulers for a paltry sum of money as late as 1848. On 26 October 1947, Maharaja Hari Singh Dogra, at the instigation of Mountbatten, and being aware that he would not be supported by his Muslim subjects, decided to accede to India.

Although, in Northwest India, the principle of contiguous areas with Muslim majorities forming a separate federation with other such territories, was accepted by all the concerned parties, the Radcliffe Commission deliberately demarcated the boundaries in a manner which gave India access to the State of Jammu and Kashmir. Thus, in this sense, the Kashmir problem is a legacy of British rule.

There are many such instances in the Third World, where the receding colonial powers have left behind such problems with a view that the underdeveloped countries should remain locked in conflict with one another and thus continue to remain dependent on their erstwhile rulers militarily and economically.

In 1947 the accession was proclaimed as provisional, subject to ratification by the people of the state through adult franchise. But the opinion of the people was never solicited, and this led to the development of tension in Indo-Pakistani relations.

When attempts to settle the dispute through bilateral negotiations between India and Pakistan failed, India approached the United Nations and demanded that Pakistan be declared an aggressor because she was aiding the rebels in Kashmir, which, according to India, had become part of Indian territory.

Pakistan denied this claim and instead charged India with illegal intervention by sending her armed forces into the state in order to prevent the people from expressing their opinion. The United Nations made no comments on the charges and counter-charges, but adopted a Resolution of 21 April 1948, declaring that the only way to settle the Kashmir problem peacefully was to demilitarise the state and thereafter to hold a plebiscite, under the auspices of the United Nations, in order to determine whether the state wanted to accede to India or Pakistan.



Subsequently, numerous United Nations resolution to more or less the same effect were adopted in 1948, 1949, 1951 and 1957. But while, according to the United Nations, the future of the state was still undecided, India declared that the state was an integral part of the Indian Union.

Eventually, full-scale hostilities broke out between the two countries in 1965 over this question. Thereafter a ceasefire was proclaimed and, again, efforts were initiated to find a solution of the problem through peaceful negotiations. But the position adopted by India was that after its accession the state had become part of India. Thereafter, India refused to admit that any Kashmir problem existed.

In the India and Pakistan War of 1971, the state again became the theatre of some battles, and the old ceasefire line was upset at many points. After the ceasefire, the matter was reconsidered by the two countries and in the Simla Agreement of 1972 it was resolved, *inter alia*, that the two countries would settle their differences through bilateral negotiations or by any other peaceful means mutually agreed upon between them and in accordance with the United Nation's Charter.

According to the Simla Agreement, there is admittedly a Pakistan factor in the Kashmir problem which awaits final settlement without recourse to force and in accordance with the United Nations Charter. Consequently, the question may be asked: What is the basis on which India and Pakistan should proceed in these bilateral negotiations?

India's declared official position is that Pakistan cannot ask for a plebiscite in the state after having entered into the Simla Agreement with India, that the United Nation's resolutions of 1948 and 1949 are dead, that the people of Kashmir have participated in numerous elections held in the state on an all-India basis, which indicates that they have accepted the state as an integral part of India, and that therefore a plebiscite on this issue now, after the lapse of more than 40 years, is simply out of the question.

It is also contended that, at this stage, history cannot be rolled back as it would amount to a second partition of India on the basis of an appeal to religion, and that this would strain Indian national unity. India also maintains that, since the Muslims as a whole constitute the largest minority in India, Pakistan should not insist on holding a plebiscite in Kashmir, for the sake of their security.

India alleges that the current turmoil in Kashmir has been engineered by Pakistan, which is aiding the militants and the fundamentalists, and thus encouraging various subversive groups in the valley to secede and join Pakistan or gain outright independence.

Pakistan's official stand is that both India and Pakistan gave a solemn pledge to the people of the state that they would be allowed to decide their own future in a free plebiscite, and that it was this promise which was subsequently incorporated in the mutually accepted United Nations resolution of 1948 and 1949.

In these circumstances, when Pakistan asserts that the Kashmir problem should be resolved on the basis of these United Nations resolutions she is only emphasising that the principles of the Charter be applied for the solution of the problem, and this is precisely what is provided in the Simla Agreement.

Consequently, India's allegation that, by making this demand, Pakistan is repudiating the Simla Agreement is without merit. The charge that Pakistan is aiding and abetting the rebels to secede in favour of Pakistan has also been vehemently denied on the ground that, since the accession of the state remains undecided, how can the question of its secession arise?

It is contended that the recent uprisings in Kashmir against oppression and the violation of democratic rights are the result of the winds of change, and are part of a global movement which has swept all over Eastern Europe as well as the Central Asian Republics of the Soviet Union.

There are some unofficial views in India on the Kashmir problem which may also be considered. For instance, Mr B. J. Verghese, a famous Indian journalist, suggests that the bilateral negotiations should proceed on the basis of rationalising or straightening the present Line of Control in Kashmir, which has been drawn arbitrarily, and that thereafter, protocols should be worked out for its demilitarisation along various sectors, in accordance with mutually agreed stages, in order to convert it into an international frontier.

It is also suggested by him that India should open Uri–Muzaffarabad, Jammu–Sialkot and other traditional routes across the Line of Control, permitting families to visit relatives, shrines and familiar places, and that trade and tourism should be encouraged.

It is also proposed that between the two parts of the state, namely Azad Kashmir and Indian Kashmir, a 'soft frontier' be established with facilities for travel, flow of trade and commerce, currency exchange, as well as customs regimes including employment (see 'An Indian View', published in *Times of India*, New Delhi, and reproduced in *Pakistan Outlook Quarterly*, vol. 1, nos 2–3 (Autumn 1989/Winter 1990) pp. 62–5).

Another unofficial viewpoint, expressed by the Indian Progressive Study Group, can also be examined. This group contends that if the Government of India still maintains that the question of the state's

accession to India has already been settled, one can simply ask ... by whom?

It is argued: although several deals were made between the Indian rulers and the Abdullahs, the Bakshis, the Sadiqs, and so on, when have the people of the state given their verdict? According to the study group: 'On the one hand lies the fact that the people of the state were made to join the Indian Union without taking into account the wishes of those very people themselves; on the other, lies the experience of these people during the period of their association with India, which has given them nothing except misery and neglect, and humiliation and repression' (*The Kashmir Problem: Why?* by the Indian Progressive Study Group, in *Viewpoint* (Lahore, 11 October 1990) p. 30).

It is pointed out that blaming the 'militants', the 'fundamentalists', or the 'foreign hand' was nothing but a trick of prejudicing the Indian people against the Kashmiris fighting for freedom.

The group is of the view that the solutions proposed by the Indian leaders for resolving the Kashmir problem do not take into account the violations of democratic rights which have taken place in the state, and these do not at all recognise the right of the Kashmiris to choose their own destiny. According to the groups, the solution of the Kashmir problem must start with the principle that the people are sovereign and should be the sole arbiters of their fate.

It is contended that the Kashmir problem is not a 'military–diplomatic squabble' between India and Pakistan; it is the denial of the rights of the Kashmiris as they have been forcibly barred from deciding for themselves the fate of Kashmir.

After investigating the matter as to why the Kashmiris of today are so angry and ready to explode, the Study Group's findings are that, with the exception of a single watch plant, there is no other significant industrial unit in the state. As a result, the number of unemployed has continued to increase, so much so that, according to the 1981 census report, there were 300,000 unemployed, which is 20 per cent of the able-bodied population of the state. It is pointed out that today it is the only state in India which lacks a legally backed minimum wage rate. In the agricultural sector, also, there is a constantly growing pauperisation of the poorer sections in the villages and, whenever the Kashmiri leaders raise their voices on these issues, they are branded as fundamentalists and pro-Pakistani, and thrown into jail.

The Study Group further maintains that Kashmir remains one of the few states in India where even the basic prerequisite of democracy, that is, an election free from rigging and intimidation, is yet to be held, and that

methods of rigging range from issuing pre-stamped ballot books and booth capturing, to counting irregularities.

According to the Study Group, before the elections, the workers of the opposition parties are usually arrested, and this has been the recurrent pattern of events ever since the first elections in 1951. It is contended that, in fact, in 1951 there was no balloting at all, because the opposition candidates were forced to withdraw by sheer intimidation. In 1957, the same story was repeated. In 1966, the elections were held under the supervision of the National Election Commission.

But the date chosen was 21 February, when the crippling cold prevented people from coming to the polls, while members of the opposition parties were put behind bars.

Similarly, in the 1972 elections, the leaders of the opposition parties were exterminated from the valley. Even the 1977 elections, which have been claimed to be free from rigging, had their due share of intimidation of opposition parties. Thus, according to the Study Group, there is ample evidence available in support of the reasoning that the Kashmiris as a whole never participated in any of these elections.

On the contrary, 'ever since 1947 the people of the state have voiced their discontent against the farce of a democracy that the Indian rulers and their collaborators in the state have imposed on them' (*ibid.*, p. 31).

The conclusion of the Indian Study Group is:

One cannot understand how the unity of Indian people can be impaired if the Indian people wage a consistent, many-sided battle for democracy, in the process upholding the rights of nationalities and rejecting the imposition of state terrorism. This is the only way the real unity of the Indian people will be forged.... They must demand that the Kashmiri people be granted their demands of self-determination. ...This is the only road to the just solution of the Kashmir problem and the creation of a democratic India. (*Ibid.*, p. 32)

It is interesting to note, however, that there is a dichotomy between the Indian official and unofficial viewpoints, whereas one finds uniformity in the Pakistani official and non-official views. The reason appears to be that the official Indian position is political, whereas unofficial viewpoints are founded on a somewhat more realistic appraisal of the prevalent situation in the valley.

Pakistan has twice gone to war with India over Kashmir. But, after 1972, for numerous reasons, the issue was more or less dead. However, it has recently been brought back to life by the Kashmiris themselves, when the alienated population has risen in militant protest against India.

Pakistan can only give moral and political support to the Kashmiris in their struggle for freedom, as she is not in a position to help them militarily. The allegation that Pakistan is militarily helping the Kashmiris is similar to the charge voiced in Pakistan that India is militarily assisting the subversive elements in Sindh. But such charges and counter-charges are probably the result of the prevalent distrust and antagonism between the two countries.

Why has the India-Pakistan conflict been protracted, and why is it that no solution has been found? Several explanations can be offered.

There is no denying the fact that there are 100 million Muslims in India, and in frequent communal riots Muslims usually suffer. However, if there is prosperity among Muslims it is due to the relative 'success' of Indian secularism.

Therefore, Pakistan should encourage the development of genuine secularism in India. But, at present, even within India, it is generally felt that the future of secularism is in jeopardy, and there are many circles which have been criticising Indian leaders for the failings of secularism as well as the violation of human rights, not only in Kashmir and Ayodhya (where the Hindu fundamentalists want to destroy the historic Babri Mosque and to raise a temple in its place), but also in the Punjab, where the Sikhs' sympathies have been alienated.

It is strange that this discrimination is the rule of the day in what India claims as Indian territories, despite the fact that India has remained a stable democratic country since 1947, whereas Pakistan has been afflicted by endemic military rule.

Another hurdle in initiating peaceful negotiations with India on any issue by a smaller power like Pakistan is that Indian foreign policy reflects hegemonic trends in South Asia. She has exercised force in the neighbouring countries, particularly Nepal and Sri Lanka. This dominating role may stem from the comparative weakness of India's neighbours in South Asia, or may be because India has acquired this power through generous Soviet help, or it may be the reflection of India's internal stability and the equilibrium of her political institutions under one constitution which has not been disturbed by military coups. It has perhaps rightly been observed by Mr Verghese:

India's interests need redefinition. They do not lie in continuing confrontation or an escalating arms race. Regional cooperation can help resolve many national problems in view of the close interaction of internal and external factors in South Asian relations.

(*'An Indian View'*, p. 65)

Indian leaders have repeatedly declared that they want friendship with Pakistan. Obviously normalisation of relations between both countries will establish regional security. They have, however, so far not adopted an appropriate policy which could lead to that friendship. Similarly, Pakistan has not made any really determined effort to establish friendly relations with India, but has maintained a competitive and combative posture.

This specific policy has cost Pakistan the squandering of enormous resources on the military. As a result, her education system has languished, literacy has declined, medical care is not available except to a few fortunate individuals in the cities, and industrialisation in the country has remained marginal. Fortunately, despite war rhetoric on both sides, neither army has moved so far. Evidently both sides want peace and neither side wants to risk a war that they cannot afford.

In order to work out a stable friendship between India and Pakistan, it is necessary to resolve the problem of Kashmir, where the bulk of the population has risen in revolt. This is only possible through democratic means and by accommodating democratic dissent, as well as respect for a distinctive Kashmir identity in accordance with the wishes and aspirations of the people of the state. India is a Third World country which has always been considered as a champion of human rights. It should not follow the example of those countries which at times exercise double standards and perceive the violation of human rights only where they want to see it and nowhere else.

The remaining disputes between India and Pakistan revolve around storage and watershed management, and flood warning systems, or involve trade and commercial relations. These disputes are obviously negotiable and can be resolved.

The agreement not to attack one another's nuclear installations has so far been successfully achieved.

Pakistan has declared time and again that she is ready to sign the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty and to accept International Atomic Energy Agency safeguards on her nuclear programme along with India, to conclude a bilateral agreement with India for mutual inspection of each other's nuclear facilities, to make a joint declaration with India renouncing nuclear weapons, and to enter into a bilateral or regional nuclear test ban agreement with India. Pakistan has also sought to strengthen non-proliferation in South Asia through its proposal for a nuclear-weapon-free zone.

The Siachen sector, where armies of both India and Pakistan are locked together at high altitudes, is a terrain which has no strategic value. Therefore, it would be better if both the parties took steps to implement the

agreement for a mutual pull-back agreed upon in 1989. The Siachen accord can become the starting point for a demilitarised Himalayan–Karakoram peace zone.

These confidence-building measures can lead to a detente between the two countries on the basis of a broad-based and multi-dimensional treaty of friendship. Under this treaty many areas of cooperation can be considered. The freer movement and exchange of people across the Indo-Pakistan border can also strengthen ties of amity and goodwill.

The possibilities may be explored as to how far SAARC can provide a framework for still wider cooperation amongst all the countries of South Asia. No doubt the present bears a heavy burden of the past, but all efforts must be made to deal with it in such a manner that it should weigh lighter in the future.

Finally, all these steps can be followed by a 'no war' pact and by securing a mutual reduction in conventional arms. Regional security will be further strengthened if tripartite negotiations are undertaken to bring about the participation of the People's Republic of China.

During the 1990s, Chinese perception of the threat emanating from the Soviet Union is at a low ebb, as the USSR and the United States are engaged in negotiations for disarmament. So let the twenty-first century be the century of global peace and security.

# 13 Southwest Asian Security Compact: Problems and Prospects

Shireen T. Hunter

The late president of Pakistan, Mohammed Zia ul-Haq, had a vision of a Southwest Asian security framework involving Pakistan, Iran, Turkey, and Afghanistan, and possibly extending to all or some of the Persian Gulf Arab states in one form or another.

The regional and international conditions prevailing during President Zia's rule in Pakistan did not permit a rigorous pursuit of this view. Nor have such conditions been any easier since his demise. But neither has the idea died down completely. Rather, periodically one or another of Pakistan's military or civilian leaders refers to it.<sup>1</sup>

But the question of how realistic and realisable such a vision is has not been adequately addressed.

Yet the end of the Cold War and the inevitable fallouts of internal changes in the Soviet Union are increasingly making the old premises, upon which regional security frameworks were constructed in the last several decades, irrelevant. Meanwhile, these same changes are making the development of new security frameworks necessary.

Thus, this is an opportune moment to inquire into the prospects for a Southwest Asian security system along the lines envisaged by President Zia ul-Haq. It is particularly timely to inquire whether recent changes within the countries of the region, in intra-regional relations, and at the international level, are likely to facilitate the realisation of such an arrangement. However, it is important first to look into the history of efforts to create a Southwest Asian security framework, and the reasons why most of the past schemes have failed or have had very limited success.

## THE COLD WAR PERIOD: BAGHDAD PACT, CENTO

The first efforts to create a regional security system for Southwest Asia began in the context of the East–West conflict, as part of the Western policy of containing further Soviet expansion. The first such security pact



was the British-sponsored 'Baghdad Pact', which was formed in 1954, with the United States being an affiliate member.

The Pact brought Iran, Pakistan, Turkey, and Iraq together. Each of these countries had specific security problems of their own. For Iran and Turkey, the Soviet threat, direct or indirect, was the principal concern. Hence there was a significant degree of commonality of interest between these two regional states and their Western partners. But for Pakistan, India has traditionally been the more significant security threat.

Iraq's membership in the Pact was more the function of its special ties with Great Britain and its rivalry with Egypt for leadership in the Arab world, rather than a shared threat of the Soviets, or at least not to the same degree as the other two. Afghanistan was not included in this system because of its neutral position as a buffer state with special ties to the Soviet Union.

In addition to having diverse security preoccupations, some of the Pact members had territorial disputes among themselves and conflicting regional ambitions, as was the case between Iran and Iraq. Thus, the only glue that held the Pact members together was the pro-Western tendencies of their leadership and a fear of the Soviet Union, albeit to varying degrees.

However, at least initially, the regional states had hoped that membership in the Pact would strengthen their position in respect to regional and even internal threats to their security.

The Baghdad Pact did not last long, and folded only four years later with the 1958 revolution in Iraq, which ended the Hashemite rule and their pro-Western policy. The Baghdad Pact was then restructured as the 'Central Treaty Organisation', without Iraq. However, CENTO was no more successful than its predecessor.

Principal reasons for the failure of both the Baghdad Pact and CENTO, as regional systems, derived from the fact that they did not adequately address the security concerns of regional states. Rather, they essentially were covers for the consolidation of the Western powers' political and military presence in these countries in the context of their competition with the Soviet Union. Indeed, for Britain the maintenance of the old colonial ties in the post-colonial period was even more important than heading off a Soviet threat. True, for those states who faced a direct Soviet threat, the Pact may have been of some value, but even this limited usefulness is debatable. The commitment of the United States or Britain to defend Iran against a Soviet attack was not based on their treaty obligation, but rather on the belief that such a threat would threaten their own vital interests. Thus, in all likelihood, even in the absence of treaty

arrangements, they would have tried to deter the attack. And, if this calculation of the threat had changed, they would have done little, treaty or no treaty.

Meanwhile, in Iran's case, membership in regional security pacts may have made the Soviet Union even more determined to undermine its security, whereas a nonaligned posture might have solicited a more conciliatory response from Moscow.

Indeed, the limited value of these alliances for the countries of the region is reflected in the fact that the United States, the principal great-power patron in CENTO, refused to sign formal bilateral security treaties with Iran and Pakistan. The US commitment to Turkey derived from the latter's membership in NATO, and not CENTO.<sup>2</sup>

Nor did the great-power partners – the United States and Great Britain – make any commitments to their allies in the region against threats to their security, although for Iran, and especially Pakistan, the regional threats such as those of India or of Arab radicals were equally, if not more, important than that of the Soviet Union.

In addition, it is extremely unlikely that either of the regional allies would have wanted to get involved in costly hostilities in defence of their partners in the absence of an immediate and overwhelming threat to their own security. For example, it is unlikely that Iran would have wanted to become embroiled in an Indo-Pakistan war unless it endangered the very survival of Pakistan and made possible the extension of Indian power to the very borders of Iran. In fact, Iran did, by and large, stay aloof from the Indo-Pakistan wars of 1965 and 1971, despite its deep anxiety over Pakistan's future in 1971. Similarly, Pakistan would have been reluctant to engage on Iran's side in an Arab–Iranian war, as it refused to take sides even politically during the eight-year Persian Gulf war between Iran and Iraq.

The same would have applied to Turkey. Again, both Iran and Pakistan stayed out of Turkey's troubles in Cyprus. Thus, it was natural that, as the threat of direct Soviet attack on regional states diminished, and as the East–West conflict became stabilised as far as the risk of direct confrontation was concerned, the rationale for regional security systems such as CENTO disappeared. Thus, although CENTO did not die until 1979, it had lost all value and effectiveness.

In addition to changes in the nature of the Soviet threat and the character of East–West competition, changes at the regional level, especially the growing links between the Arab world and the so-called Northern Tier subsystem, made security cooperation, even among the three CENTO members, more complicated, let alone any notion of

extending their cooperation to some of the Arab states. In fact, this development created new tensions, even among such friends as Pakistan and Iran, given their different perceptions of, and interests in, the Arab world.

#### THE 1973 OIL CRISIS, RISE OF THE PERSIAN GULF ARAB STATES, AND INCREASED REGIONAL LINKS: IMPACT ON SOUTHWEST ASIAN COOPERATION

The interaction between the Arab Middle East, the Persian Gulf, and the Northern Tier countries predates the 1973 oil crisis. A detailed study of the character and evolution of this linkage is beyond the scope of this study. Here only the following points will be discussed.

One important element of linkage has always been the Arab–Israeli conflict and the role of the Northern Tier countries in this regard. The Arab nationalists, in particular, have always viewed the pro-Western members of the Western-sponsored security systems, plus the Persian Gulf sheikdoms, as enemies of the Arabs and impediments to the restoration of Arab rights in Palestine.

Until the Iranian revolution of 1979, Israel, too, considered its ties to Iran and Turkey as an important element of its security strategy.<sup>3</sup>

Moreover, while the Soviet threat was highly important for the Northern Tier countries, many Arab states had close ties with the Soviet Union and saw the Soviet Union as a counterweight to their principal enemy, Israel, and its patron, the United States.

Thus, the nature of these countries' governments and their foreign policy was a special concern for many Arabs, some of which periodically tried to change their regimes. For example, in the 1950s and 1960s Nasser's Egypt was involved in subversion against Iran and the Persian Gulf sheikdoms. In the 1970s, Iraq, Syria, and other Arab radicals waged an extensive campaign of subversion against Iran.<sup>4</sup>

In addition to the problem of Palestine, and differences in regard to superpower relations, there were other causes of Arab–Iranian tensions related to territorial disputes, rivalry for regional supremacy, and the expansionist and anti-Iranian dimensions of extreme Arab nationalism. Nor did these problems relate only to Iran's relations with radical Arabs.<sup>5</sup>

On the contrary, tensions existed between Iran and some conservative Arab governments, especially Saudi Arabia, despite their otherwise common security interests. Saudi–Iranian tensions resulted, in part, from their respective attempts at regional leadership. Iran wanted to become an

Indian Ocean power, whereas Saudi Arabia considered the Persian Gulf, the Arabian Peninsula, and the Red Sea region as its private hunting ground.<sup>6</sup>

In addition, while forced, out of necessity, to have limited cooperation with Iran, prior to the 1979 revolution the Saudis had – and still do have – a deep dislike for the Persians and the Shi'as. This is derived from the Saudis' adherence to Wahhabism, whose theory views the Shi'as as worse than infidels. Hence, the Saudis viewed the expansion of Iran's influence in the region and its periphery with apprehension and tried to counter it.

This Arab–Iranian tension and competition would affect the regional politics of Southwest Asia, especially in Pakistan–Iran relations.

However, the oil crisis of 1973 dramatically enhanced the level of regional interaction and interpenetration. The Persian Gulf Arab states, especially Saudi Arabia, through the use of petrodollar diplomacy, enhanced their influence both in the Arab world and in its periphery.<sup>7</sup>

Pakistan was one area where the Saudi presence began to grow steadily and reached a dominant position in the 1980s. In addition to the active use of petrodollars, the consequences of the economic boom in Saudi Arabia and other Persian Gulf Arab states created an intricate web of economic and financial dependence for Pakistan on these states, through the export of excess labour and the flow of remittances, as well as other relations such as military links.<sup>8</sup>

Pakistan's growing Arab links, while perfectly natural and legitimate, were bound to create complications with Iran. When the Shah was in power in Iran and Zulfikar Ali Bhutto was the Prime Minister of Pakistan, tensions in Pakistan–Iran relations from this quarter resulted from Pakistan's ties with radical Arab states, especially Libya, which was heavily involved in financing and training anti-Shah opposition forces. For example, the Shah refused to take part in the first Islamic Summit in 1974, held in Lahore, because of Colonel Mu'ammad Qadhafi's participation.

However, because of Iran's strategic importance for Pakistan, as well as Pakistan's value for Iran, plus the two countries' essentially pro-Western policy, despite Bhutto's flirtation with Arab radicals, Iran–Pakistan relations remained strong.

However, the fall of Bhutto as a result of the military coup d'état under the leadership of General Zia ul-Haq in 1977, and later the Islamic revolution in Iran in 1979, completely changed the context of Iran–Pakistan relations.

It is very difficult to speculate on how Iran–Pakistan relations might have evolved had the Shah remained in power while Pakistan went through an intense process of Islamisation and increasingly close relations with Saudi

Arabia. It is conceivable that Pakistan would not have become as close to Saudi Arabia as it has, had Iran remained strong and stable in the 1980s.

What is certain is that the Shah would have been a formidable competitor and even, unencumbered by any Islamic scruples, could have, and would have, played the Indian card more effectively. Despite lingering mistrust of India and competition in the Indian ocean, Indo-Iranian relations had greatly expanded and improved, especially after Indira Gandhi's visit to Tehran in the summer of 1974. The Islamic regime, because of its ideological rigidities, and in view of Iran's internal chaos, did not have these flexibilities.

Moreover, the Iraqi aggression against Iran in September 1980, and the eight-year war that followed, severely limited Iran's strategic and political options. Thus, Iran did not react to certain trends in Pakistan and to certain aspects of Pakistan's foreign policy as strongly as it could have done under other circumstances.

Nevertheless, changes both in Iran and in Pakistan during the 1980s, plus changes in the region, and the latest developments in superpower relations, have greatly complicated the context of Iran-Pakistan relations. It is the thesis of this author that they have made the idea of a regional security pact for Southwest Asia far less realistic.

The following arguments will attempt to argue this case.

## DOMESTIC CHANGE IN IRAN AND PAKISTAN: IMPACT ON BILATERAL RELATIONS

Both Iran and Pakistan have experienced an intense process of Islamisation during the 1980s. In principle, this process should have helped to bring the two countries closer together. In reality, however, this process has created new barriers between the two countries and potential sources of new conflict.

Indeed, were it not for the importance of geopolitical and other reasons which bind the two countries together, Pakistan-Iran relations could have deteriorated seriously. To begin with, the brand of Islam promoted under the regime of President Zia ul-Haq has been very much influenced by Saudi Islam.

Since the 1960s, Wahhabis have embarked on proselytising efforts in Afghanistan and Pakistan. Given the visceral hatred of the Wahhabis toward the Shi'as, it is obvious that neither Iran's nor Pakistan's Shi'as, nor for that matter Shi'as anywhere, could be happy over Wahhabism and Saudism creeping into Pakistan.

Indeed, it is often argued that Pakistan's Islamisation programme has deepened sectarian conflict in the country.<sup>9</sup> Some argue that it has been these policies that for the first time have led to the Pakistani Shi'as political mobilisation.<sup>10</sup>

Islamic Iran considers its message to be universalist, cutting across sectarian divides. The fact, however, remains that Iran is a Shi'a country and its principal sympathisers are among the Shi'as. Thus, in the event of a worsening sectarian conflict in Pakistan, Iran cannot help but be dragged into the dispute in defence of the Shi'as.

Indeed, the Iranian government has, so far, shown remarkable restraint in not becoming embroiled in sectarian disputes in Pakistan. The Iranian press, however, has at times been less cautious. For example, the Iranian press has bitterly complained about the laxity of Pakistan's authorities in punishing those responsible for the murder of the Pakistan Shi'a leader Allamah Arif Hussain Hussaini, and have attributed this to undue Saudi influence on Pakistan.<sup>11</sup>

Moreover, many Iranian revolutionaries view – rightly or wrongly – Saudi Islam as reactionary, focusing on ritual and not on the revolutionary essence of Muhammad's Islam, hence the appellation 'American Islam'. Meanwhile, conservative Muslims in Pakistan have accused Iran of 'Islamic Marxism'.

Irrespective of the inherent merit of these arguments, the fact remains that Islamisation has divided the two countries rather than bringing them closer. President Zia ul-Haq's rule, plus growing Pakistani-Arab relations, have also led to what one Pakistani characterised as the 'Arabisation' of Pakistan, while the area's traditional cultural links in the West have been closer to Persian culture.

This fact, too, is bound to drive Pakistan and Iran further apart unless the trend is averted, especially now that, after a period of anti-nationalist campaign, Iranian nationalism, particularly cultural nationalism, is reasserting itself. Even the Islamic regime is talking about the role that the Iranians and the Persian language have historically played in spreading Islam from the Indian subcontinent to China and Malaysia.

The election of Benazir Bhutto to the premiership seemed to indicate a possible shift in Pakistan's Islamisation and perhaps some distancing from Saudi Arabia, even though her first foreign visit was to Saudi King Fahd. It was indeed expected that under Bhutto Pakistan would pursue closer cooperation with Iran and Turkey. But both Bhutto and her vision were opposed by powerful elements in Pakistan, particularly the military. Her recent defeat in the election, and the premiership of Mian Nawaz Sharif – a protégé of the late President Zia ul-Haq – seem to

indicate the victory of the Islamic and pro-Saudi wing of Pakistani politics.

The change of regime in Iran and Pakistan in the 1970s also led to growing divergences in their foreign-policy outlook, especially the close US–Pakistan alliance of the 1980s and the bitter enmity between Iran and the United States.

Again, it is remarkable how Iran and Pakistan have managed to limit the disruptive impact of these differences on their bilateral relations and to maintain reasonably friendly ties.

However, during the 1980s close US–Pakistan links, and the US–Iran confrontation, made any notion of a West Asian security framework impossible. Indeed, many in the United States viewed even talk of such a cooperation with apprehension and would not have allowed it even if other conditions had permitted it.<sup>12</sup> This dimension of the problem, however, may change should there be simultaneously an improvement in US–Iran relations and a loosening of the US–Pakistan alliance.

## REGIONAL DEVELOPMENTS: IMPACT ON BILATERAL RELATIONS

Regional developments in the 1980s have also tended to create more problems and conflict of interest between Iran and Pakistan, rather than drawing them closer. The most important of these developments were the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and the ensuing war between the Afghan resistance and the Soviet-backed government in Kabul and, for a long period, the presence of Soviet troops in the area.

The war has had significant, and in many respects costly and disruptive, consequences for both Iran and Pakistan. Both countries have become home to massive numbers of Afghan refugees. The social, and perhaps even political, costs of hosting 3 million Afghan refugees have been high for Pakistan. But at least Pakistan has received massive foreign aid in compensation for its role in the Afghan war. Iran, however, had to bear the brunt of more than 2 million refugees without assistance from abroad.

As long as the Soviet forces were inside Afghanistan, both Iran and Pakistan had a common interest in seeing them withdraw from that country. But the two countries have had significant differences on the shape of a future Afghan government and its position toward regional states and the great powers, although both Iran and Pakistan have said that they want an independent, non-aligned, and Islamic Afghanistan.

Pakistani–Iranian disagreements on the Afghan issue have several roots. In part, they reflect their different ethnic and sectarian makeup. Iran, quite naturally, has greater affinity with the Afghan Shi’as (mainly Hazaras) and other Persian-speaking groups in Afghanistan. These groups, especially the Shi’as, have historically been discriminated against by the Sunni Pashtuns who have wielded power in Afghanistan. Indeed, the overwhelming majority of Afghan refugees in Iran are Shi’as or Persian speakers. The eight Iran-based Afghan Mojahedin groups are mostly Shi’as.

Pakistan’s connections, also quite naturally, are with the Pashtun Sunni organisation, notably the seven Peshawar-based Mojahedin groups. The inability of different Afghan groups to reach a fair agreement on power-sharing in the aftermath of Soviet withdrawal has caused, and will cause, problems for Pakistan and Iran. This became quite clear in the winter of 1989, during negotiations for the formation of an interim Afghan government in anticipation of the collapse of the Kabul regime. Allegedly, under Saudi and Pakistani pressures, the Shi’a organisations were not given adequate representation, which led to their withdrawal from the talks. And thus the interim government that emerged was Pashtun Sunni, which contributed to its becoming almost irrelevant in the fight for Afghanistan’s future.

In addition, Pakistan – or at least segments of its powerful military, supported by Saudi Arabia – wants to put its own man in power in Kabul – namely the extremist Gulbuddin Hekmatyar – so as to ensure Pakistan and Saudi Arabia a dominant voice over Afghanistan’s future.

This, too, would be unacceptable to Iran. Iran can understand and accept an adequate Pakistani presence in Afghanistan, which would reassure Pakistan that it does not face any threat from that quarter, and also would put to rest the issue of Pashtunistan. However, Iran would not accept an Afghan government which was subservient to Pakistan and Saudi Arabia, and which would inevitably try to limit Iran’s presence and undermine the position of its constituency within the country.

It must be stressed that it is not so much a strong Pakistani presence which is objectionable to Iran. Rather, it is the question of Pakistan acting in tandem with Saudi Arabia, and as the military arm of a long-term Saudi policy of expanding its influence in Central Asia, of which Wahhabi proselytising is another tool.

Another point of discord between Iran and Pakistan on the Afghanistan issue is the nature of a future Afghan government’s position *vis-à-vis* the great powers. Iran obviously does not want to see Afghanistan become part of the Western, or more specifically American, sphere of influence.



While the future of US–Pakistan relations is less certain in the 1990s than it was in the 1980s, the basic US–Pakistan alliance is likely to survive. Thus the US–Pakistan links plus the US–Saudi connection mean that a Saudi–Pakistani-dominated Afghan government, in most probability, would be close to the United States. This situation would further increase the Iranian regime’s sense of insecurity and encirclement by pro-American governments. However, this aspect of the problem may be resolved by an improvement in US–Iran relations and a loosening of the US–Pakistani embrace. However, what the foregoing illustrates is that any talk of a West Asian security framework is premature as long as the fate of Afghanistan is not clear.

## TURKEY–IRAN

The changes of the last ten years, most notably the Islamic revolution in Iran, have also strained Turkish–Iranian relations. While pragmatic considerations on both sides have helped maintain a difficult accommodation between the two states, their widening differences have eroded the common basis upon which a security cooperation could be built.<sup>13</sup>

Turkey is a US ally and generally supports Western security goals in the Middle East and South Asia. This factor alone would make a workable security arrangement involving Iran and Turkey problematic. However, should US–Iran relations improve, the constraining effects of this factor could be mitigated. However, as will be explained below, the international and regional changes unleashed by the fundamental transformation of the Soviet Union could potentially create serious strains in Turkish–Iranian relations, possibly even leading to conflict.

## CHANGES IN THE SOVIET UNION: IMPACT ON PROSPECTS OF SOUTHWEST ASIAN SECURITY COOPERATION

The dramatic changes in the Soviet Union in the last few years, leading to the end of the Cold War, have drastically altered the international security environment, as well as that of Southwest Asia.

Given the proximity of Southwest Asia to the Soviet Union and the long history of great-power rivalry in this area, the ramifications of changes in the Soviet Union, for this area, would be far-reaching.

The most significant of the changes is the abandonment by the Soviet Union of the goal of extending socialism beyond its borders, directly

through the introduction of military power, as it tried to do in Iran in 1945–6 and in Afghanistan in 1979, or indirectly through the manipulation of the vulnerable points of those it coveted.

This, of course, does not mean that the Soviet Union no longer seeks political and economic advantages, particularly in its immediate surroundings. However, this change in Soviet goals dramatically alters the security environment of Southwest Asian countries. This change, in fact, makes the Soviet Union an acceptable and, under certain circumstances, even a desirable partner for some of these countries. For example, since 1989 Soviet–Iranian relations have drastically improved, although because of the Soviet Union’s internal uncertainties the future of these ties is also unclear.

As far as the prospects for Southwest Asian cooperation are concerned, for the following reasons the changes in Soviet goals and tactics have rendered them less, rather than more, realistic.

This is so because the common fear of the Soviet Union and its intentions has been the principal if not the only reason that, in the past, served as the basis of regional security arrangements. It has also been the principal reason for the often uneasy accommodation that has existed between Iran on the one hand, and Turkey and Pakistan on the other, since the Islamic revolution.<sup>14</sup>

With the common Soviet threat gone, it is very difficult to see what common perception of security threat could bring these three countries, plus Afghanistan and maybe certain Arab states, together. And without a clear security threat more or less equally shared by prospective partners, no security arrangement would be workable or successful.

In addition, the elimination of the Soviet threat plus the disintegrative process in the Soviet Union’s internal empire, including Muslim republics in the Caucasus and Central Asia, could lead to the reemergence of some old rivalries and give rise to new ones among Southwest Asian countries.

For example, as the Soviet Union’s Muslim republics move toward greater independence, reassertion of their ethnic and cultural roots, and the establishing of new and independent ties with their neighbours, the historic cultural and political Turko–Iranian rivalry could reemerge. Already, in Central Asia, cultural competition has developed between the Persian-speaking Tajiks and the Turkic Uzbeks.

In Soviet Azerbaijan, whose people are Turkic-speaking, but with deep historic, cultural, and religious ties with Iran, there is a tension between the Iranian and Turkic dimensions of their cultural identity.<sup>15</sup> Politically as well, Azerbaijan is divided between those who want closer ties, and some

even outright union, with Iran, and the pan-Turkists who want closer ties with Turkey.

Some of the extreme pan-Turkists in Turkey and Azerbaijan scheme about dismembering Iran by uniting Soviet Turkmenistan, parts of northeastern Iran, the Turkman Sahra in northern Iran, and the Iranian Azerbaijan, with Turkey and Soviet Azerbaijan. They argue that in this way the natural gas reserves of this area would make Turkey energy self-sufficient. The same thinking is also behind Turkey's claim to Mosul and Kirkuk in Iraqi Kurdistan.

Of course, currently the Turkish government does not subscribe to these extreme and dangerous theories. However, there is already a Turkish-Iranian competition in Azerbaijan. Should the political circumstances change in Turkey, the active pursuance of the pan-Turkic scheme would inevitably lead to Turkish-Iranian confrontation, just as Iraq's extreme pan-Arabism contributed greatly to their eight-year war in the 1980s.

Pakistan, or at least an element within Pakistan's powerful military, also has ambitions in Central Asia, calling for the creation of an Islamistan.

Saudi Arabia is active in Tajikistan and Uzbekistan through Wahhabi proselytising. If Pakistan and Saudi Arabia were to pursue a joint strategy in Central Asia, as they did in Afghanistan, it would further erode Iran-Pakistan entente.

## CONCLUSIONS

The foregoing has illustrated that the changes of the last decade within Southwest Asian countries, in the region and internationally, have made the notions of a Southwest Asian security compact along the lines envisaged by President Zia ul-Haq unrealistic. In addition, new changes in the Soviet Union, and their fallouts regionally, by eliminating the only common security threat – the Soviet threat – and creating new sources of potential conflict among prospective members of a Southwest Asian security system, have made such a scheme less rather than more realistic.

In addition, the latest crises in the Persian Gulf, the introduction of foreign forces into the area, and the still uncertain future of the crisis, have cast a deep shadow over the entire region.

What is certain is that how this crisis is resolved will have deep and far-reaching consequences for the entire region, possibly reshaping the entire geopolitical context. Whether the consequences of this crisis will make possible this particular vision of Southwest Asian security or render

it more unrealistic is not clear. A great deal will also depend on the domestic evolution of these countries and the character and wisdom of their leadership.

Ethnic, sectarian, class, and other types of polarisation within these countries would make regional cooperation more difficult. Similarly, the pursuance of ambitious and expansionist politics, be it of territorial, cultural, or political variety, would certainly lead to conflict rather than cooperation.

However, if these pitfalls are avoided, there are factors, especially economic ones, which could bring these countries, and possibly even some of the emerging Muslim republics, together. The global trend is toward regional economic integration. Southwest Asian countries do not easily fit into any of the existing or prospective regional economic organisations such as EC, ASEAN, or a variety of Arab schemes, including the GCC. Turkey's hope of joining Europe is likely to be disappointed.

Thus, economic cooperation between Iran, Pakistan, Turkey, Afghanistan, and some Soviet Asian republics makes sense. In the past, economic cooperation schemes such as the Regional Cooperation for Development (RCD) formed in 1964 between Iran, Pakistan, and Turkey, and recently resurrected under the title of Economic Cooperation Organisation (ECO), have not been very successful.

Nevertheless, significant complementarities exist between these countries. Iran's energy and other resources, Turkey's industrial and technological base, and Pakistan's vast potential properly utilised, could give rise to a viable economic cooperation zone. And if such schemes are successful, they would create a solid basis for security cooperation as well. But at the moment the prospects for a security compact are not favourable.

## NOTES

1. See 'The Great Game: Third Time Lucky', *The Economist*, 10–16 December 1988: 'Now that the Russians are leaving Afghanistan, Pakistan wants to build a regional alliance that embraces Turkey and Iran, plus whatever government that emerges in post-war Afghanistan...' The idea was a favourite of Zia ul-Haq, Pakistan's dead dictator. It appears to have survived his death. Zia's successor, the Army Chief-of-Staff, has been emphasising the need for a 'strategic consensus' to deal with the 'new realities' facing these countries.
2. On US–Iran security relations and the US refusal to sign a bilateral security treaty with Iran, see R. K. Ramazani, *The United States and Iran* (New York: Praeger, 1981) pp. 37–8.

3. This indeed was part of Israel's so-called 'peripheral strategy'.
  4. Nasser's Egypt fuelled anti-Shah opposition and launched a campaign against Iranian communities in the Persian Gulf, accusing Iran of wanting to create another 'Palestine' in the Persian Gulf. In the 1970s Iraq created several liberation fronts, such as 'Front for the Liberation of Ahwaz', 'Front for the Liberation of Baluchistan', aimed at enticing tribes and ethnic minorities against Iran's central government. Iraq also sponsored the 'Front for the Liberation of Occupied [Arab] Gulf'.
- The PLO and Syria trained anti-Shah guerrillas in their camps in Lebanon, and Libya gave financial assistance to anti-Shah groups. See R. M. Burrell and A. J. Cottrell, *Iran, Afghanistan, Pakistan: Tensions and Dilemmas* (California: Sage Publications, 1974); also R. K. Ramazani, *The Persian Gulf: Iran's Role* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1973).
5. For an analysis of Arab-Iranian relations, see Shireen T. Hunter, *Iran and the World: Continuity in a Revolutionary Decade* (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1990) pp. 98–131.
  6. According to one author, the Saudis wanted to turn the Red Sea into an 'Arab Lake'. See James Fitzgerald, 'Djibouti: A Petrodollar Protectorate', *Horn of Africa*, vol. 1, no. 4 (October/November 1978) pp. 25–31.
  7. On the Saudi use of petrodollar diplomacy, see Shireen T. Hunter, *OPEC and the Third World: The Politics of Aid* (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1984) pp. 123–32. Also Louis Turner and James Boder, 'The Power of Purse Strings', *International Affairs*, vol. 54 (July 1978) pp. 405–21.
  8. On Saudi-Pakistan relations see Shirin Tahir-Kheli's 'The Saudi-Pakistani Military Relationship: Implications for US Policy', *Orbis*, vol. 26, no. 1 (Spring 1982) pp. 165–71. Imtiaz H. Bokhari 'Pakistan-Saudi Arabia Strategic Connection', *Journal of South Asian and Middle Eastern Studies*, vol. 9, no. 1 (Fall 1985) pp. 26–45.
  9. See, for example, Mumtaz Ahmad's 'Pakistan' in Shireen T. Hunter (ed.), *The Politics of Islamic Revivalism: Diversity and Unity* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1988) pp. 229–46.
  10. See Mahnaz Ispahani, *Pakistan: Dimensions of Insecurity*, Adelphi Paper no. 6 (London: International Institute of Strategic Studies, 1990).
  11. For example, the Tehran English daily, *Tehran Times*, in its 13 June 1990 issue, after complaining about the unwillingness of Pakistan authorities to punish his assassins, and pointing to Pakistan's vulnerability to ethnic and religious strife, said the following: 'For the source of these conflicts one will have also to take into account the not-too-subtle and not-too-holy connection some Pakistani ethnic and religious groups have with foreign governments. The "Saudi connection" sets one good example of such obnoxious relationships. The Saudi court is seriously involved in Wahhabi propaganda in Pakistan and sends huge sums of money to some domestic ethnic leaders there. The goal is of course nothing but to secure some political gains for the Saudi rulers at the cost of internal strife and bloodshed among Pakistani Muslims. *One of the main features of this Saudi campaign is of course its anti-Shiite activities. ...[my italics]*' (*Foreign Broadcast Information Service (FBIS)*, 25 June 1990, pp. 49–50).

12. See the exchange between Representative Leach and the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Near East and South Asia at the US Department of State on the subject. Foreign Assistance Legislation for Fiscal Years 1990–91. Hearings of Subcommittee on Asian and Pacific Affairs, Committee on Foreign Affairs, House of Representatives, Washington DC, 1989, p. 594.
13. On Turkish–Iranian relations since the revolution, see Shireen T. Hunter, *Iran and the World*, pp. 137–8.
14. For most of the 1980s, both Turkey and Pakistan were fearful that too much US–Western pressure on Iran risked pushing it into the Soviet orbit; hence, they both tried to prevent this outcome by accommodating Iran as much as possible.
15. See Shireen T. Hunter, 'National Movements in Soviet Asia', *Current History*, vol. 89, no. 549 (October 1990) p. 325. Also on Tajik–Uzbek cultural rivalry, see Ann Sheehy, 'Tadjiks Question Republican Frontiers', Radio Liberty Research (11 August 1988) pp. 1–5.

# 14 The Prospects for SAARC

## Sumit Ganguly

### ORIGINS

The notion of regional cooperation in South Asia is an odd one. After all, this is one region of the world that has witnessed not only its fair share of intra-state conflict but four wars of some consequence. (I am referring to the three Indo-Pakistani conflicts of 1947–48, 1965 and 1971 and the Sino-Indian border war of 1962.) The states in the region have had varying degrees of difficulty in promoting national integration. From the time of their independence in 1947, India and Pakistan have sought to integrate the state of Kashmir. India also had to resort to force in 1947 to integrate the two former princely states of Hyderabad and Junagadh. Later, when negotiations failed, India again resorted to force to evict the last outpost of Portuguese colonialism in Goa in 1961. More recently, India has been faced with a series of autonomist movements in its northeast, where Naga and Mizo rebels have challenged the extension of state authority. These conflicts have all but subsided. However, other and indeed worse problems – those of the Punjab and Kashmir – threaten Indian unity.

Pakistan's fortunes in the area of national integration have been less successful. A combination of economic, cultural and primarily linguistic grievances led to a secessionist movement in East Pakistan, culminating in the genesis of Bangladesh in 1971. In the post-1971 era, Pakistan has continued to witness the periodic rise of autonomist sentiment in the western province of Sindh. Nor has Bangladesh escaped ethnic and regional discord. During the 1990s, tribal groups in the Chakma hill tracts resist the imposition of central authority. However, the most compelling ethnic conflict raging in South Asia, with the possible exceptions of the Punjab and Kashmir, is in Sri Lanka. Here the Tamil minority seek to redress what they perceive to be Sinhalese attempts to deny them equal socioeconomic and political status.

Many of these internal conflicts are not self-contained but percolate through porous borders. In 1971 India actively aided the East Pakistani *Mukti Bahini* ('freedom force') and there was considerable support for Bengali nationalism in the adjoining state of West Bengal. Today there are widespread allegations of Pakistani support for Kashmiri and Sikh terrorists. Until the signing of the Indo-Sri Lankan accord, in mid-1988,

there was also evidence of tacit Indian support for the Tamil guerrillas in Sri Lanka. Conflict and discord, rather than cooperation and harmony, have characterised the relations of the South Asia states since independence.

It is hardly surprising that this region should be characterised by such 'fissiparous tendencies'.<sup>1</sup> It is an oft-repeated bromide that the region is a veritable patchwork quilt of religious persuasions, linguistic differences and consequent cultural heterogeneity. The statement is nevertheless worth reiterating. Such cultural diversity can often lead to violent conflict. One has only to look to the European experience to find compelling historical antecedents.

Despite the prevalence of internal discord and external conflict for nearly three decades, efforts have been under way to obtain a degree of cooperation and harmony in the region. The immediate origins of SAARC (the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation) must be traced to the initiatives launched between 1977 and 1981 by the assassinated Bangladeshi leader, General Ziaur Rehman. However, the idea of, and efforts toward, regional cooperation in South Asia long precede General Zia's legacy.

Discussions about regional cooperation in Asia in general, and South Asia in particular, were mooted at the Asian Relations Conference held in New Delhi in late March and early April 1947. Organised under the auspices of the semi-autonomous Indian Council for World Affairs, the conference drew delegates from some 25 Asian nations. This conference had an obviously anti-colonial tone and the delegates, many of whom were nascent heads of state, proudly proclaimed the arrival of free Asia on the world scene. While proclaiming their newly-acquired status as independent states, they also expressed misgivings about the possibilities of being dominated by the larger Asian powers. In turn, the two largest Asian nations in attendance, India and China, discovered that despite professions of amity, there were important and concrete differences that divided them. Specifically, the Indians and the Chinese clashed on two issues. First, on a general level, they were in contention about their respective desires to assume the leadership role in Asia. Second, and more particularly, the Chinese objected to a map which showed Tibet to be a separate state.<sup>2</sup> Both issues were to take on much greater significance in the years that followed, and ultimately culminated in the Sino-Indian border war of 1962.

The conference ended without any concrete proposals for action. If anything, the smaller nations were interested in limiting the freer movement of populations in Asia. At best, all the states in attendance celebrated Asia's resurgence. No specific proposals for increased regional cooperation emerged, let alone concrete efforts toward regional integration.



The results should not have come as a surprise. Most of the delegations were led by individuals who had recently brought their nations to independence. At this time they were hardly likely to concede any hint of their hard-won sovereignty to a supra-national organisation. In the words of Sisir Gupta, an Indian scholar-diplomat:

...viewed from the angle of regional integration, the conference was evidently more important for exposing the problems involved in any such attempt than achieving concrete results.<sup>3</sup>

The conference was scheduled to meet again in China in 1949. Owing to the civil war and the Chinese Revolution, it failed to transpire. It maintained a notional existence until 1957 when it was quietly disbanded. The idea of regional cooperation, however, was not extinguished and continued to persist, albeit in a fitful fashion. It was evident in the Baguio Conference of May 1950, held in the Philippines. The conference was attended by India, Pakistan, Australia, Indonesia, Thailand and Ceylon (later Sri Lanka). By this time, the winds of the Cold War were being felt in Asia and there was a greater sense of discord among the Asian nations. The Philippines and Australia were distinctly pro-American and anti-Communist, whereas the other states were neutral to varying degrees. In substantive terms this conference achieved little. It could only exhort its members to promote greater cultural cooperation.<sup>4</sup>

The idea of regional cooperation underwent a shift at this point. Instead of emphasising the evanescent possibilities of regional integration, the focus turned to the possibilities of shielding Asia from Cold War tensions. India's Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru, played a major role in stressing the need to keep Asia free from superpower competition. His principal fear was that the crying need for economic development in Asia would suffer a major setback if it was drawn into the vortex of superpower competition. The fear in turn stemmed from the belief that involvement with the superpowers and their conflicts would lead to the militarisation of Asian societies. Peace, in Nehru's view then, was an 'emergent necessity'.<sup>5</sup> Nehru's ideas, though unacceptable to both superpowers, found favour with some Asian leaders. In keeping with the sentiments espoused by Nehru, the Prime Minister of Ceylon convened a conference in Colombo in April 1954. This was attended by Burma, India, Pakistan and Indonesia. The conference agenda contained such diverse issues as the threat of the hydrogen bomb to international security, to that of international Communism. Again, national perspectives and interests quickly overshadowed the larger goal of seeking peace and amity in Asia. To the Ceylonese and the Pakistanis the spread of international Communism was

the principal concern. Also, Pakistan sought to bring up its bilateral problem with India over the unresolved question of Kashmir. The bilateral differences and the divergent views about the Cold War limited the cooperative dimensions of this conference. Over the next several years these differences, particularly those of a bilateral nature, would only widen. The participants at this conference, with the exception of Pakistan, met again in 1956. Again there was desultory talk about increasing cooperation but it amounted to little.<sup>6</sup>

In the interim, in 1955, President Sukarno of Indonesia had convened the Bandung Conference. The conference enumerated a large and diverse set of goals, most of them relating to building a sense of solidarity between newly independent African and Asian nations. From the standpoint of regional integration, the delegates enumerated a long agenda of cooperative ventures. They included suggestions for mutual technical assistance, the establishment of regional banks, the creation of regional training institutes and the possibilities of collective bargaining in specific issue areas.<sup>7</sup> However, no machinery or institutional means for achieving such ends were actively considered. In large part this may simply have stemmed from the twin political and economic difficulties of supporting such organisations. The political problems would have arisen from a diversity of specific interests. The economic problems would have stemmed from the paucity of funds that were available to these nations. Despite the inability of the Bandung Conference to make much headway in the area of regional integration, it nevertheless provided the basis of what came to be known as the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM).

The only other effort at regional integration, of any note, in Asia was attempted under the aegis of the British Commonwealth of Nations. At a Commonwealth Foreign Ministers meeting in Colombo in 1950, discussions were held about possible means of enhancing economic development in Asia. To this end, the Foreign Ministers agreed to make bilateral arrangements to provide technical training, and direct technical and economic assistance. While this programme met with varying degrees of success, it remained a largely bilateral set of arrangements and has not fundamentally contributed to regional integration.

## REKINDLING AN IDEA

After the mid-1960s it was difficult to conceive of the possibilities of regional integration in South Asia. Discord, both internal and external, characterised the region. Not until the early 1970s did the region expe-

rience any degree of political stability. Despite this political stability, the region remained one of the poorest in the world. The initiative for regional cooperation came from Bangladesh, the poorest nation in the region. Three distinct reasons can be suggested for the timing of this initiative. First, General Ziaur Rehman had come to power in a military coup in 1975, overthrowing the civilian regime of Sheikh Mujibur Rehman, founder of Bangladesh. India, the dominant regional power, had seen the overthrow of Sheikh Mujibur Rehman as a major foreign-policy setback. India had not only supported him prior to the creation of Bangladesh but had subsequently seen his regime as sympathetic to its interests. The new military regime could not be counted on to pursue policies congruent with Indian concerns. Thus, it was perhaps with a view to allaying Indian misgivings that General Ziaur Rehman decided to explore the possibilities of a regional organisation devoted to regional cooperation. Second, Bangladesh would be more likely to get a better hearing on certain outstanding problems that it faced with India if they could be raised in a multilateral forum. Third, the moment was propitious for mootng the idea of regional cooperation because of the regime in India. The Janata Party was in office in India and was pursuing a more conciliatory foreign policy towards India's neighbours than had been the case during Mrs Gandhi's regime. Specifically, as far as Bangladesh was concerned, it was during this time that an important accord on sharing the Ganga river waters was signed between India and Bangladesh. Despite domestic opposition in India, the Indian government made significant concessions to the Bangladeshi demands for a greater share of the river waters.<sup>8</sup>

Despite the Government of India's willingness to make significant concession on the Ganga river waters, the suspicions about General Ziaur Rehman's regime remained. Thus when General Zia first suggested a cooperative venture he was met with a less-than-enthusiastic response from India. The smaller countries of the region, such as Nepal, Bhutan and Sri Lanka, were more forthcoming. (Initially, the Maldives was not approached.) Pakistan, like India, also viewed this proposal with a mixture of caution and suspicion. Their caution stemmed from the fear of precipitously agreeing to a notion that had long been moribund in the region. The suspicion arose from two interrelated sources. India feared that this proposed forum or organisation would be used by its smaller neighbours to 'gang up' against it and start a drumbeat of their grievances. Pakistan, in turn, feared that India might dominate this organisation and turn the smaller states against Pakistan. Despite this initial suspicion and caution, both nations, after careful scrutiny of the proposal, gave their assent.

The fact that the two larger powers in the region should have viewed Ziaur Rehman's proposals with circumspection is indicative of the difficulties of promoting regional cooperation. What distinguishes South Asia from other successful examples of regional cooperation is that, as a region, there is a lack of easy economic complementarity such as that in Western Europe, or a perceived security threat, as in South East Asia. Nevertheless, the Bangladesh Foreign Ministry's memorandum that formally proposed the creation of the South Asian Regional Cooperation (SARC) organisation pointed out that:

while other regions have evolved institutional arrangements for consultations on matters of mutual interest and cooperation in the economic, social and cultural fields on a regional basis, and had consequently benefited immensely from such cooperation, the only region which did not have such arrangements for regional cooperation was the South Asian region which comprised one-fifth of the world's population.<sup>9</sup>

The memorandum also contended that if South Asia were to achieve a degree of regional cohesion it could hope to have a more effective voice at the United Nations and other multilateral fora. Finally, it alluded to the common values enshrined in the cultural, ethnic and historical traditions of the region and sought to use them as a basis for regional cooperation. Interestingly enough, it did not seek to smooth over existing differences. It merely suggested that through regional cooperation it might be possible to ameliorate the differences that had characterised the relations of the states within the region. The memorandum was also careful in spelling out that:

Regional Cooperation in South Asia as elsewhere in the world should in no way intrude on the existing bilateral and multilateral relations of the countries in the region; nor does the proposal envisage either the substitution or the disruption of existing cooperation between or amongst the countries of the region in other forums.<sup>10</sup>

In substantive terms the memorandum spelt out the possible areas of cooperation. These areas had been previously identified when General Ziaur Rehman's personal emissary visited various South Asian capitals, and in notes exchanged following his visits. The possible areas of cooperation that were identified were as follows: telecommunications, meteorology, transport, shipping, tourism, the agricultural/rural sector, joint ventures, the promotion of markets for selected commodities, scientific and technological cooperation, educational cooperation and cultural cooperation.

From this list it is more than apparent that the proponents of this organisation had started with a strong functionalist bias. Clearly the hope was that, by focusing on relatively uncontroversial and apolitical areas, the greatest degree of cooperation could be achieved. The hope and expectation was that success in these areas would promote a degree of amity and trust and thereby have positive 'spillover' effects into other more contentious areas.<sup>11</sup>

## GETTING STARTED

Despite its laudable goals, the organisation had a timorous beginning. Initially it was decided that the first meeting of the organisation would take place at the bureaucratic level. It is interesting to note that the principal opponents of a political-level meeting were India and Pakistan.<sup>12</sup> This meeting of the Foreign Secretaries of the South Asian states was held in Colombo between 21 and 24 April 1981. From the outset it was obvious that the bilateral differences that had long characterised the region would continue to have an impact on the workings of this nascent organisation. Both India and Pakistan expressed reservations about institutionalising the SARC organisation. Instead they suggested that certain basic principles of how the proposed organisation would function be decided before institutional arrangements were put in place.

Accordingly, the joint communiqué released at the conclusion of this meeting spelt out the rules of discourse within the organisation. Among other matters, it stated that all decisions would be taken on the basis of unanimity, that 'bilateral and contentious' issues would not be discussed under the aegis of SARC and that regional cooperation was not intended or expected to be a substitute for bilateral and multilateral cooperation.<sup>13</sup> Using the paper prepared by Bangladesh, the delegates agreed to set up five Study Groups and coordinators to explore the issue-areas proposed in the paper. They were: (1) Agriculture (Bangladesh); (2) Rural Development (Sri Lanka); (3) Telecommunications (Pakistan); (4) Meteorology (India); and (5) Health and Population Activities (Nepal). The purpose of the Study Groups was to examine the scope and potential for cooperation in the respective issue-areas and to make recommendations at the next meeting of the Foreign Secretaries. Simultaneously a Committee of the Whole was appointed, with Sri Lanka as the coordinator, to explore other possible areas of cooperation. The Committee of the Whole, though composed of senior officials from all the seven countries, was seen as a consultative and not a deliberative body. Accordingly, its report stated that

final decisions on all issues would be taken by the Foreign Secretaries. Also, in keeping with the overall spirit of the SARC organisation, the rule of unanimity would also apply to the proceedings of this committee.

The next meeting of the Foreign Secretaries was held in Kathmandu between 1 and 4 November 1981. At this meeting the Foreign Secretaries affirmed the importance of continuing the SARC ventures, stating that regional cooperation was 'beneficial, desirable and necessary'.<sup>14</sup> The mere fact that this meeting was held as planned indicated that, despite bilateral differences between the key nations in the region, a certain commitment to the SARC process had developed. At this time Indo-Pakistani relations had sunk to a new low over their different responses to the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and the renewed US – Pakistani strategic nexus.

At this meeting it was decided to convert the existing Study Groups into Working Groups in each of the five areas of cooperation that had been already identified. It was also agreed that the Chairmanship of the Study Groups would be on a rotational basis, with the periodicity being determined initially by each group. The initial coordinators of the various Study Groups were made the Chairs of the Working Groups. The purpose of these Working Groups would be to draw up programmes for co-operative action both in the immediate and in the longer terms.

The Commitment to the SARC process was evident in that the Foreign Secretaries had the mandate from their respective national governments to expand the scope of the organisation's activities. At the Kathmandu meeting they decided to expand the ambit of SARC. To the existing agenda they added the following: (1) Transport (Coordinator: Maldives); (2) Postal Services (Coordinator: Bhutan); (3) Scientific and Technological Co-operation (Coordinator: Pakistan). At this meeting the Foreign Secretaries also agreed to hold their next meeting within the next six to eight months. It was decided that a Foreign Ministers' meeting would also be held in 1982.

The Foreign Secretaries met again, in Islamabad, between 7 and 9 August 1982. In his keynote address, the Pakistani Foreign Minister, Sahabzada Yakub Khan, spoke of the 'equal stake of all the countries of the region in the preservation of peace and security'. There is little question that this allusion to shared concerns about regional peace and security was a veiled reference to the markedly divergent positions that India and its neighbours had taken on the Soviet invasion and occupation of Afghanistan. Though the Indian position had evolved since 1980, it was a far cry from those held by its neighbours, particularly Pakistan. With the exception of Bhutan, which had also abstained from directly criticising the Soviets, India's neighbours had all expressed their displeasure about the Soviet presence in Afghanistan to varying degrees.

Despite the obvious difference of perspectives on a crucial issue of regional security, the meeting marked the continuing evolution of the SARC process. At this meeting the Foreign Secretaries endorsed the reports of the Study Groups on transport, postal services and scientific and technological cooperation. They also decided to convert these Study Groups into Working Groups, with the existing Coordinators being made the Chairs of their respective groups. The areas of cooperation were also expanded with the creation of two new Study Groups. One would deal with Sports, Arts and Cultures and the other with Planning and Development. At a procedural level, the conferees decided that the Chairmanship of the Working Groups would be for a period of two years and would rotate in alphabetical order.

In addition to these developments the Committee of the Whole was now charged with moving towards an integrated programme of action (IPA) in the areas that had been identified for cooperation. Specifically, it was asked to formulate the means, both organisational and financial, to implement the projected goals.<sup>15</sup>

In preparation for the ministerial meeting in New Delhi, two meetings were held. The first was a meeting of the Committee of the Whole at Colombo between 10 and 13 January 1983. The second was a Foreign Secretaries' meeting held at Dhaka between 28 and 30 March 1983. At the first meeting the committee sought to set up the mechanisms for co-operative ventures. It especially dealt with the financial obligations of the members to defray the costs of the proposed activities. Specifically, it recommended that national governments regularly allocate specific sums of money in their national budgets to the particular ministries responsible for the cooperative ventures, that they make provisions for *ad hoc* allocations, and that they provide scholarships, concessionary air fares and accommodation to individuals involved in SARC-related activities.<sup>16</sup>

The Dhaka meeting expanded on the work of the Committee of the Whole. It sought to start the implementation of the IPA. It also welcomed the offers of assistance to SARC that had come from the International Telecommunications Union and the European Economic Community.

The first meeting of the SARC Foreign Ministers was not at a propitious time. Ethnic violence against the Sri Lankan Tamils had inflamed the sentiments in India, particularly in the state of Tamil Nadu, the home of some 50 million Indian Tamils. Apparently there were some doubts as to whether or not the Sri Lankan Foreign Minister would attend this meeting, but eventually he did. In this meeting, and two subsequent ones held at Male in July 1984 and Thimpu in 1985, the groundwork was laid for the institutionalisation of the organisation. In institutional terms, SARC

became a three-tiered organisation. At the bottom were the Foreign Secretaries, at the next level the Foreign Ministers, and at the apex the Prime Ministers of the seven states. The top-level meetings are considered as the SARC (SAARC after 1985) summits.

The first SARC summit, appropriately enough, was held at Dhaka in December 1985. At this meeting several important steps were taken to make this essentially consultative body into a formal organisation, embodying a set of explicit goals, rules and procedures. The bulk of the preparatory work having been done earlier, in the secretarial and ministerial-level meetings, the summit basically ratified and gave formal assent to an already agreed-upon agenda. Immediately, the members changed the name of the nascent organisation from SARC to SAARC (from South Asian Regional Cooperation to South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation). This meeting also produced a SAARC charter, which spelt out the rights and duties of the members. To a very large extent the SAARC charter embodies the very principles that were contained in the original Bangladeshi proposal for the creation of a regional organisation.

With a view to institutionalising the organisation, the members also decided to create a SAARC Secretariat. Bangladesh and Nepal actively vied and lobbied for the right to house the Secretariat and eventually it was agreed to locate it in Kathmandu. It was also at this meeting that national leaders, during the course of private and informal sessions, decided that the SAARC summits should be held once a year and that their respective Foreign Ministers should confer at least twice a year. A greater number of ministerial-level meetings would also be permissible if the need arose. The Foreign Secretaries were scheduled to meet three times a year.<sup>17</sup> These significant procedural developments suggested that the organisation had successfully weathered the vagaries of regional and international politics, ranging from the overthrow of General Ziaur Rehman (the original proponent of the organisation), to the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan, to the assassination of Mrs Gandhi.

On a substantive note, the meeting added two new possible areas of cooperation to the organisation's agenda. They were the international control of the narcotics trade and of international terrorism. It is widely believed that the addition of these two issue-areas was at the suggestion of the United States, which was increasingly preoccupied with these two issues on its own foreign policy agenda. While the question of controlling the narcotics traffic was unexceptional and relatively non-controversial, the same could not be said of the matter of terrorism. Observers of the SAARC process have questioned whether or not this issue can indeed be deemed to be non-contentious.<sup>18</sup>



The second SAARC summit, held in Bangalore, India, in November 1988, sought to expand the achievements of the Dhaka meeting. Despite incipient Indo-Pakistani tensions over border demarcations at the Siachen Glacier in Kashmir, and Indian accusations about Pakistan's alleged support to Sikh terrorists in the Punjab, the meeting was largely free of acrimonious exchanges. Nor did the continuing Sinhala-Tamil ethnic violence in Sri Lanka colour the proceedings in a demonstrable fashion. At the conclusion of the summit the Pakistani Foreign Secretary, Abdus Sattar, commented that: 'within a short time since its inception, SAARC has made impressive progress.' His Indian counterpart, A. P. Venkateshwaran, concurred.<sup>19</sup>

Though free of angry rhetoric, the meeting made painfully slow progress on substantive issues. Despite the formal commitment to prevent politicisation of the issues under discussion, the obvious difficulties with such a principle were evident. The national leaders and their aides failed to come up with an acceptable definition of terrorism. The failure to define terrorism was hardly surprising. As alluded to earlier, with India accusing Pakistan of actively aiding and abetting the Sikh terrorists and Sri Lanka contending that it was justified in using force against Tamil militants, a quick accord on this issue was virtually impossible.

The other substantive issue on which the conferees made little headway was that of regional economic and industrial cooperation. India had made a cogent appeal on this matter but ultimately it proved to be a non-starter, owing to Pakistani opposition. In Pakistan's view greater economic cooperation within SAARC would eventually call for the opening up of its markets to Indian manufactured goods. This, the Pakistanis feared, would simply mean the end of many of their domestic industries, given India's sophisticated and diversified industrial base.

Despite the lack of progress on issues on the formal agenda, the meeting in particular, and the SAARC process in general, were not bereft of value to its members. The meeting served as an important venue for informal contacts between the leaders of the various nations. It was these contacts that made possible small, positive shifts on many bilateral fronts. It was reported, for example, that Pakistan's Prime Minister Mohammed Khan Junejo and Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi of India privately dealt with the prickly question of terrorism and the normalisation of Indo-Pakistani relations. In a multilateral context, the nations agreed to develop a joint strategy on global economic issues at international fora.<sup>20</sup>

The role of regional politics was underscored in the SAARC Foreign Ministers' meeting that preceded the Kathmandu summit. Shortly before this meeting India had used Indian Air Force planes to airdrop relief supplies to Sri Lankan Tamils trapped in the Jaffna peninsula. The

decision to airdrop supplies (which involved at least a nominal violation of Sri Lankan airspace) had come in the wake of Sri Lanka's refusal to allow an Indian naval convoy to provide humanitarian assistance to the beleaguered population. Without entering into a discussion of the merits (or the lack thereof) of the Indian decision to airdrop relief supplies, it was clear that the mission had deeply offended Sri Lankan sensibilities. On 18 June 1987, at the opening of the Foreign Ministers' meeting, the Sri Lankan Foreign Minister, A. C. Shahul Hameed, made a compelling plea to modify the SAARC charter. He contended that, even though initially the members had decided to exclude all bilateral issues from this forum, recent developments necessitated a reconsideration of that principle. Specifically he stated that:

When conflicts confront us do we turn a blind eye? It could be argued that if we do not discuss issues and problems among us, then how do we strengthen our forum – surely we are not driving them to other fora?

He continued, saying that:

SAARC must not end up as a deaf, dumb and blind organisation. If we brush aside issues under the carpet because they are unpalatable, we will be taking the first step in crippling SAARC.<sup>21</sup>

The sentiments of the Sri Lankan Foreign Minister were echoed by his Pakistani colleague Sahabzada Yakub Khan. It is hardly surprising that the Pakistani delegate should have picked up on a Sri Lankan grievance. India's active interest and involvement in the Sri Lankan ethnic turmoil no doubt stirred not-so-dormant Pakistani memories of the Indian intervention in East Pakistan in 1971. The Indian Foreign Minister, Narayan Dutt Tiwari, strongly rebuffed the Sri Lankan and Pakistani suggestions for amending the charter. Eventually, it was the Bangladeshi Foreign Minister, Humayun Rashid Choudhury, whose efforts succeeded in defusing this incipient crisis. While conceding that events in the region do influence stands taken in SAARC, it was vital to the continuing success of the organisation that members adhere to the spirit and letter of the charter, avoiding 'contentious and bilateral issues'.<sup>22</sup> Despite Choudhury's sage counsel, recent developments suggest that his pleas, though of some effect in their immediate term, carried little weight in the long term.

Though not bereft of problems, the next SAARC summit, held in Kathmandu, Nepal in November 1987, produced some significant results. There were two major achievements at this meeting. The first was the creation of a 200,000 tonne buffer stock of foodgrains (the South Asian Food Security Reserve) to be used in the event of national emergencies.

The other was a regional convention on the suppression of terrorism. Both of these subjects merit discussion.

The buffer stocks will exist independently of the national reserves and will be supplied to the fellow members on bilateral terms as the need arises. In emergencies, countries may themselves draw upon these stocks for domestic consumption. However, they are expected to inform all other members.<sup>23</sup> Most observers have noted that this agreement is a small positive step. However, it has its detractors. They contend that the stock is painfully small, that there are no mechanisms for ascertaining that countries have indeed set aside the requisite amount, and that the authority administering the buffer will have no means to assess the real needs of the country seeking the resources.<sup>24</sup>

The other agreement, that dealing with the extradition of terrorists, appears to be important. However, it is not problem-free. In essence the members agreed to extradite those engaged in criminal acts of terror. The agreement will require the amending of the pertinent legislation in each nation and then bilateral treaties between governments. Given the existence of a number of extant ethnic conflicts that transcend national borders in South Asia, this agreement, while agreed on at a general level, may be harder to implement on a national and bilateral basis. According to the same critic:

The procedural nitty-gritty apart, what is the value of such a convention when there is no agreement on what constitutes terrorism and who a terrorist is? The Sikh terrorists who find such easy refuge in Pakistan, not to mention succour, are hardly seen in that light by Islamabad. In Sri Lanka, the Tamil militants have been regarded from the beginning as terrorists, an appellation never used of them, officially or otherwise in India.<sup>25</sup>

There is probably more than a modicum of truth to the line of criticism expressed above. Clearly the definition of what constitutes terrorism is not free of political considerations. It would indeed vest vast powers in the hands of the state if all the conferees had agreed with President Jayawardene, who stated at this conclave that, 'any violence against the State is terrorism'.<sup>26</sup>

Without entirely dismissing the significance of these two steps, it is nevertheless possible to concede that they are fraught with difficulties. Unfortunately for the continuing success of SAARC these are not the only difficulties that surfaced. In certain areas the conferees could not even resolve their differences and produce an appearance of amity and concord. India had supported Afghanistan's inclusion in SAARC. This proposal

was met with staunch Pakistani opposition while being attacked with varying degrees of vigour by the other states. The ostensible reason for the Pakistani opposition to Afghanistan's membership was provided by Pakistan's Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, Zain Noorani. According to him, while there was no inherent objection to Afghanistan's membership in the organisation, at the present time it was not possible to consider it, as the country was under Soviet occupation. Eventually a face-saving gesture was made by a SAARC spokesman, a Nepalese diplomat. He stated that the issue could not be dealt with as no formal application for membership was pending before the body.<sup>27</sup>

There were other contentious issues that surfaced at this summit. Most of them were reflections of bilateral concerns. One such issue was Pakistan's proposal for a nuclear-free South Asia. This was a reprise of an old Pakistani stand largely designed to embarrass India. Though well aware that China looms large in India's strategic calculus, where nuclear weapons are concerned Pakistan persists in this strategy, knowing that it will place India on the defensive. Much to India's dismay, the Bhutanese King Jigme Singye Wangchuk picked up this issue in his speech. He pointedly remarked that SAARC members could not pontificate on this issue unless they themselves were willing to forswear the nuclear option. India, expectedly on the defensive, scored a debating point by stating that nuclear disarmament was a global and not a regional problem.<sup>28</sup>

Other bilateral problems also cropped up at the meeting. Bangladesh sought to bring up the issue of Himalayan water development. India sensed that this was a not-so-veiled attempt to raise the issue of water sharing in the Gangetic delta. The Indian response was that as this issue did not concern all the SAARC member states it did not fall within the purview of the conference. Eventually, the members agreed to set up a committee to study a closely related issue, the causes and consequences of natural disasters in South Asia.<sup>29</sup>

Substantive progress in SAARC has been painfully slow. The last SAARC summit, held in Islamabad in January 1989, produced a slender list of accomplishments. It did away with visa requirements for Members of Parliament and Supreme Court Judges travelling within the region. It also declared the year as 'the SAARC year against drug abuse' as well as the 'SAARC year of the girl child'.<sup>30</sup> It is important to bear in mind that these were the principal accomplishments of the summit at a time when the two major antagonists of the subcontinent, India and Pakistan, had found a fleeting moment of cordiality. The Rajiv Gandhi government was sympathetically disposed to the nascent regime of Benazir Bhutto and the two leaders had quickly developed some personal rapport.

## SAARC ACHIEVEMENTS

The 1990s brought to the SAARC a different set of problems. With new regimes in both India and Pakistan and an atmosphere poisoned by renewed ethnic separatist turmoil in Kashmir, it is doubtful that significant progress will be made. Yet support for this fledgling organisation is growing. In an article written in November 1990, Eric Gonsalves, a distinguished former Indian diplomat, trenchantly argued for a modification of the principle of unanimity. Instead he suggested that procedural matters be handled by majority vote. Gonsalves also went on to argue that:

Acceptance that regional cooperation will play a much more important role in the future must become an article of faith not only in foreign ministries, but throughout the governments of South Asia.<sup>31</sup>

Gonsalves's exhortation remains a distant goal. SAARC's material accomplishments have been limited.

Beyond setting up the buffer stock, reaching the accord on the extradition of terrorists, and easing travel restrictions on parliamentarians and senior judges, we are compelled to ask, what else has SAARC achieved? Is it indeed, in the words of one observer, little more than a mountain of disharmony struggling to produce a mouse of concord? The answer is complex. To begin with the very concept, and more than that, the corporeal existence of this organisation, is an achievement in itself. In a region that has known more than its fair share of internal discord and external conflict, the creation and sustenance of this organisation offers a modicum of hope for the future. It provides a forum to search for solutions to a range of problems that are endemic to the region. These range from such overarching issues as environmental degradation to smaller ones such as telephonic links within the region. Though accord on these issues may not be promptly forthcoming, SAARC is an invaluable forum in which to at least raise them and explore the means by which solutions may be found. As Rajiv Gandhi argued at the Islamabad summit:

Once an ethos is established in which we signal to our bureaucracies a political commitment to open doors, the doors will, of their own accord, begin to open.<sup>32</sup>

Though the prospects of any dramatic breakthroughs are remote or practically nil, SAARC will make cautious, incremental progress. Apart from the achievements that have been enumerated, there are other low-level accomplishments that the organisation can be credited with. For the

first time in the history of these nations, joint telephonic and direct links are being established. These may not appear to be achievements worthy of heralding. Yet it needs to be borne in mind that until recently it was easier to place a call from New Delhi or any other SAARC capital to the United States or Western Europe than within any of the nations in the region. Air links were of a similar character. Now, in addition to improving these physical links, a number of procedural changes will enhance regional people-to-people contacts. SAARC tourists travelling within the region will have to pay only half the normal airfare if they travel to more than two SAARC nations. Arrangements for group tours within the region are also under way. Yet another familiar *bête noire* of most tourists in the SAARC region, the paucity of foreign exchange, appears to be on its way out. It has been agreed that up to \$400 worth of foreign exchange will be made available per traveller.<sup>33</sup>

Even these minor achievements have been criticised by the region's intellectuals. One long-term observer of the SAARC process complains that, while these changes may be laudable enough, they only affect a tiny fraction of the population of the SAARC states. As he has written:

After all what percentage of South Asian masses have an easy and assured access to air-travel, television, telephones, tourism and higher education? Very small indeed.<sup>34</sup>

Though it may sound like needless carping there is probably a large element of truth to his criticism. Yet it is unrealistic to expect the national leaders of these states to act otherwise. Despite a professed commitment to eradicate poverty and reduce inequalities, vast segments of the populations of these nations remain at the edge of subsistence. In India, the largest country in the region, close to 30 per cent of the population live below the officially defined poverty line.<sup>35</sup> Clearly the national political elites in South Asia have not devoted the bulk of their efforts to ameliorating the lot of these segments of their populations in their endeavours at SAARC.

## CONCLUSIONS

What lies in store for the future of SAARC? Unlike the other two successful examples of regional cooperation, ASEAN and the EEC, SAARC lacks the common perceived threats of both. In the case of ASEAN there has long been a shared sense of threat from the People's Republic of China and, until recently, the Soviet Union. The threat from China loomed especially large in Malaysia and Indonesia, states with large

ethnic Chinese populations. Not only had Western Europe long faced a common sense of peril from the Soviet presence in Eastern Europe, but it was also driven by the exigencies of postwar economic reconstruction. Additionally, unlike the states of South Asia, which are in the process of state-building, with the possible exception of West Germany, the state in Western Europe had reached its apogee.

In South Asia the process of state construction is still in its infancy. Indeed the writ of many of the South Asian states is at question. To use Clifford Geertz's terms, these nations are 'old societies and new states'. The state structure of most of these nations is fragile, weak and under stress. Under these conditions, when the state is desperately seeking the loyalties of all segments of its population, it is difficult for it to be open to the possibilities of transnational cooperation. After all, such transnational cooperation makes a state more porous and erodes its exclusive authority. It is precisely this fear of the loss of national control of a range of activities that animates South Asian elites. In turn, this fear is simply compounded by the history of regional conflicts.

Yet many of the problems that confront South Asia call for such multinational cooperation. Whether it is the prevention of soil erosion in the Himalayan *terai* region, the ability to track monsoonal cyclones, the prevention of regional crop diseases, or even the international marketing of primary commodities like tea – multinational cooperation is indeed the crying need of the times.

For the very reasons spelled out above it is unlikely that any dramatic cooperative ventures will be launched in the foreseeable future. The seven nations will continue to meet, they will continue to bicker and they will, hopefully, find some small common grounds to achieve a modicum of cooperation.

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# 15 Risks and Benefits of Nuclear Weapons: the Case of Pakistan

Lawrence Ziring

Ever since Zulfikar Ali Bhutto intoned Pakistan's quest for nuclear weapons in the mid-1970s, this Muslim country has been the object of searching investigations as to the status of its atomic programme. Concern that Islamabad was near to producing nuclear weapons can be traced to 1979, when it was allegedly detected ready to test a device of unknown properties. Although premature, the rumours about the imminence of such a test fuelled a controversy which swelled, deepened and expanded in the 1980s. Most upset with the prospect that Pakistan was seeking membership of the nuclear club, were the United States, the Soviet Union, and India. New Delhi was perhaps the most distressed, but it did not have to be reminded that its own detonation of a nuclear device in 1974 triggered the Pakistani response and accelerated its atomic programme.

Since Bhutto's public call for an 'Islamic bomb', Pakistani authorities have been relatively mute or defensive on that subject, avoiding such description and preferring to emphasise the positive, that Pakistan's atomic programme is no different from those of so many other countries interested in harnessing the power of the atom.<sup>1</sup>

Pakistan's reaction to international concern about its nuclear intentions has been two-pronged. On the one side, successive Pakistani governments have argued that their atomic programme is solely concerned with research and development of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes. On the other, they have argued against the application of double standards by the superpowers, especially the more stringent that are applied to Islamabad and not directed equally at New Delhi.<sup>2</sup> How, for example, could the United States continue supplying fuel for India's atomic reactors while denying Pakistan a modicum of understanding on the subject of atomic energy? In Islamabad, such contradiction is met with pained reaction. In general, Pakistan's public emphasis has been to parry arguments about its 'secret' nuclear weapons activity, while urging that South Asia and the Indian Ocean be legally defined as a nuclear free zone.<sup>3</sup> In the later exercise, Islamabad has repeated its call to India to terminate all

developments that might cause the region to become a nuclear war zone. Mindful that India, like itself, is not a signatory to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) of 1968, Pakistan has repeatedly declared its willingness to sign the agreement if New Delhi would do the same.<sup>4</sup>

This political study is not a technical excursion into Pakistan's nuclear programme. It is nevertheless an attempt to come to grips with Pakistan's quest for nuclear 'sufficiency', especially in its continuing struggle with India. After more than a decade of concerted Pakistani effort, a variety of intelligence organisations have concluded that Pakistan currently possesses nuclear weapons. This author has no reason to challenge that conclusion and will assume that Islamabad is one of several unofficial members of the nuclear weapons club. This chapter therefore examines the advantages and disadvantages for Pakistan as a nuclear weapons power.

## THE POLITICAL BACKGROUND

The possession of nuclear weapons is considered an awesome responsibility. Each new entrant into the nuclear weapons circle has been met with much apprehension and uncertainty by those already there. Thus far the identifiable nuclear weapons powers are also the world's major international actors, and world opinion has more or less accepted their nuclear weapons monopoly. Nevertheless, the reigning nuclear powers are made uneasy when other states seek to intrude themselves into their select group. Those already there are assumed capable of managing and controlling such destructive power. It is with considerable trepidation that other states, perceived to be less in control of their destiny and hence less responsible, may also be nuclear weapons capable, or at the threshold of such acquisition. Israel, South Africa, Argentina, and Iraq as nuclear weapons powers elevate concern to its highest level, and Pakistan is grouped with such nations. The reasons for this are not too difficult to identify.

Pakistan is not a stable country. Politically, it has experienced turmoil and dislocation from the first days following independence. Seldom have its governments attained full term. Governments have been terminated in the midst of significant unrest. Constitutions have been promulgated and discarded soon after, or have been so altered as to no longer represent their central purpose. Martial law and long periods of military dominance over civilian authority have played havoc with political institutions and caused atrophy in political processes.<sup>5</sup> Civil unrest, a product of sectarian

as well as ethnic division, has necessitated police and military actions, but the application of force has done little to address underlying causes for the mayhem. External conflict has also dogged the nation from its inception.

Three wars with India, the last of which developed from a tragic civil war, have left a legacy of bitterness and fear. The dismemberment of the country in 1971, by New Delhi, confirmed in Pakistani minds India's determination to destroy their country. But while the 1971 war added credence to India's role as Pakistan's number-one enemy, the dismemberment, curiously, did not cause Pakistan to become a more unified, stable nation.

Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto assumed responsibility for 'picking up the pieces' of what remained of Pakistan following the 1971 Indo-Pakistani War.<sup>6</sup> Although provided with a mandate to govern, and the beneficiary of a broad coalition, his administration could not be sustained. His ousting, subsequent arrest, trial, and execution, signalled the emergence of still another dominant figure, General Mohammad Zia ul-Haq.

Zia obliterated Bhutto's secular, quasi-socialist design, and instituted another which he claimed was more in keeping with the Pakistani ethos. The emphasis on the Nizam-i-Mustapha was aimed at transforming Pakistan into a chaste Islamic state. But, as with Bhutto's system, this one too encountered stiff, often unreconciled opposition.<sup>7</sup> Each leader sought to work around his critics, but neither was victorious in producing a successfully coherent scheme. With Zia's mysterious death in the explosion of his military transport aircraft, in 1988, Pakistan was hastened to another path that addressed the country's long-diverted democratic aspirations, but this too was doomed to failure.

Benazir Bhutto was Pakistan's only national figure of note following Zia's passing, and her party's relative success at the polls projected her into the prime minister's office. Although long locked in a bitter struggle with the man most responsible for the death of her father, and heralded in much of the world as Pakistan's great democratic hope, Benazir was hardly prepared for the responsibility conferred upon her. Her twenty-two months in office represented one long unending conflict with her detractors. And while she tried to ward off their assault, she found it impossible to focus on outstanding issues, bridge rivalries between her supporters and their adversaries, or quell internecine turbulence. Her brief administration proved to be weaker, not stronger, than those preceding her, and external threats posed by New Delhi, and the continuing, relatively unsuccessful, war in Afghanistan (note the Jalalabad campaign of 1989) further undermined her authority. Moreover, the Kashmir

dispute, and the more intense and violent character of that struggle in the early months of 1990, was something Benazir could only follow, not lead.

India, already disturbed by alleged Pakistani support for Sikh separatists, had even more reason to judge Pakistan directly responsible for the Kashmiri *intefada*. Islamabad could not change its long-held position that Kashmir was disputed territory and that the Kashmiri people were entitled to self-determination.<sup>8</sup> Coupled with domestic strife of unusual magnitude, this most recent confrontation with India over Kashmir did not make for a more stable Pakistan. Indeed, the many uncertainties provided the background for still another sudden shift in government fortunes. Benazir and her government, along with the National and provincial assemblies, were dismissed by President Ghulam Ishaq Khan on 6 August 1990.

This latest display of instability produced a caretaker government led by Ghulam Mustafa Jatoi, a one-time confidant of Benazir's father, and former leader of the Pakistan People's Party. Determined in his opposition to Benazir and those who supported her, Jatoi tried unsuccessfully to have the ousted prime minister disqualified from participation in the country's political life. He also accused members of the erstwhile government of betraying a public trust and violating every aspect of the country's constitution.<sup>9</sup> While this scenario was being played out it was left for others, somewhat detached from the political contest, to conclude that the country operated more on instinct than on skill, and that chicanery, not public trust, was the way to power and influence.

Still another election, on 24 October 1990, gave Mian Nawaz Sharif an opportunity to form the government. More closely associated with the Pakistani military establishment, he was expected to promote policies that would address its interests. But no matter the form, or character, or leadership of government in Islamabad, Pakistan's nuclear weapons programme moved along a relentless course. To the outside observer the nuclear programme appeared unaffected by the turbulence in Pakistan's streets or the dramatic changes in government, in government policy, and in government personnel. The distant monitor could only wonder how nuclear weapons policy was controlled in such unstable political conditions. Pakistan seemed so wracked by division, and so burdened by failed leaders and systems, that the prospect of the country going nuclear only lowered their threshold of fear. In a number of countries Pakistan was judged unsuited for the responsibility that went with the possession of nuclear weapons.

Needless to say this was not the view from Pakistan. In spite of its celebrated internal problems, of which Pakistanis are the most critical

observers, in the matter of nuclear policy there are few voices that speak out against the nation's desire to develop and utilise nuclear power.<sup>10</sup> In the matter of weapons there is little more information inside the country than that acquired by outsiders. But what represents fear on the outside is definitely not reflected internally. Pakistanis may be opposed to their army's interference in domestic politics, but they are almost totally behind the military's quest for nuclear weapons. While the vast majority are prepared to accept their governments' repeated claims that they are only pursuing the peaceful uses of the atom, that same number derive considerable pride from the possibility that Pakistan is developing, or may already possess, nuclear weapons.

For some time now the Pakistani nation has perceived Israel in particular and Zionism in general as most responsible for the vocal anti-Pakistan, anti-nuclear lobby in the United States. Why this should be, appears connected with the Israeli destruction of the Iraqi Osirak reactor in 1981, as well as with Bhutto's characterisation of his weapons project as an 'Islamic bomb'. Israel is judged a major threat to Islam, and especially to Muslim nations.<sup>11</sup> Pakistanis are convinced the Israelis already possess nuclear weapons and they therefore see no reason why a Muslim country should be denied the same capability. If there is a domestic issue around which Pakistanis are likely to agree it is the 'right' of their country to possess nuclear arms.

India's role as a nuclear power adds salience to the Pakistani argument. New Delhi is an ever-present threat to the country's security and Pakistani opinion does not need convincing that its military establishment should have the means to deter aggression. It follows that the country should also be in a position to neutralise efforts at nuclear blackmail. Despite all the attention given to Israel, there is little doubt India is the primary problem. It is therefore most unlikely that internal constraints exist in Pakistan, or could even be developed, to counter the government's nuclear policy. Pakistanis see the nuclear weapons issue as a matter of national necessity. It is also a matter of national pride, and where national pride is otherwise so thin, where national identity has long proved ephemeral, this wellspring of unity cannot be ignored. If there is a tie that binds the Pakistan nation, it is the quest for nuclear weapons capability.

## INTERNATIONAL DIMENSIONS

With help from Canada, the KANNUP reactor was constructed to supply energy to the teeming metropolis of Karachi. But Pakistani dependence

on continuing Canadian assistance, in the form of nuclear fuel and spare parts, revealed the fragility of the project. Although commissioned in 1972, KANNUP failed to perform as forecast, in part a consequence of Canada's reluctance to sustain its commitment to the project. But if KANNUP was less than a success, Islamabad's arrangement with France proved to be a veritable disaster.

France agreed to assist Pakistan in building a reprocessing plant. As soon as it became public knowledge, Washington intervened, ultimately pressuring Paris to withdraw from the project. Pakistan had invested Prs 67 crore (a crore equals 10 million) in civil works and plant structure by the time the French yielded to American demands, and, although a firm contract had been entered into, the Pakistanis were left to pursue the matter of nuclear power more or less alone.<sup>12</sup> Angered by what it considered duplicity on the part of its allies, Islamabad launched an all-out drive to obtain the necessary technology and know-how to develop its own facility. Calling upon its citizens abroad to assist in this endeavour, a number of well-placed individuals were recruited to secure the necessary tools and blueprints.

In December 1981, General Zia ul-Haq, for the first time, provided some insight into Pakistan's new nuclear programme.<sup>13</sup> Zia revealed that his government was constructing a uranium enrichment centrifuge facility, using indigenous uranium ore drawn from quarries in the Northwest Frontier Province. He noted that this decision had been taken only after US pressure on France had denied Pakistan a promised reprocessing plant. Zia insisted that it was not Pakistan's intention to build atomic bombs, that the enrichment plant had nothing to do with weapons technology. But, after denying Pakistan's quest for nuclear weapons, he nonetheless felt constrained to add that, even if his nation could produce such a bomb, it would never explode it.<sup>14</sup> Despite the ambiguity in Zia's remarks, his presentation represented the first official announcement that Pakistan was engaged in a centrifuge project.

The disclosure was unexpected and its impact was sufficient to raise new concerns about Pakistan's real intentions. The focus had been on reprocessing, which was judged more attainable by developing countries. Enrichment technology, however, was of a different order of sophistication. More complex, the enrichment project placed Pakistan in the forefront of nuclear technology. However, the project was a challenge and a test for Pakistan's scientific community – Zia noted that Pakistan was one of only five nations in the world with such experience. According to the experts, Pakistan was in striking range of producing its first atomic weapons.

The Carter administration had tried to slow the Pakistan drive for nuclear 'sufficiency' and it was relatively successful in getting the Western nations to ban the sale of nuclear reactors to non-NPT countries. Ronald Reagan's triumph at the polls, however, brought a new administration into Washington, and Pakistan had a better chance to move its nuclear programme forward.

One can credit the war in Afghanistan for the shift in the US government's attitude, if not policy. Given Moscow's aggressive actions in Afghanistan, Reagan went far beyond Carter's 'peanuts' offer of military aid, and made Pakistan a choice recipient of American-made arms.<sup>15</sup> The Pakistani Army and Air Force underwent modernisation, with the acquisition of some of the world's state-of-the-art weapons systems. In part, the Reagan administration argued that conventional arms transfer would deflect Pakistan from its nuclear weapons programme. But in fact Pakistan was relatively free to press on with its efforts and was able to put into operation a more intensive, secretive acquisition of the necessary parts and blueprints for the completion of the enrichment facility at Kahuta.

The Symington amendment denied US assistance to countries known to be engaged in nuclear weapons preparations or production. Islamabad was faced time and again with this prohibition during the Reagan tenure and time and again members of the US Congress threatened to suspend aid to Pakistan if it proved to be in violation of the amendment. Islamabad refused to open its facilities to international inspection, but the Reagan administration moved around the prohibition by certifying (the Presler certification) that Islamabad was indeed in compliance with the amendment. Thus Congress waived the provision on one occasion after another. The reasons for the American President's action were said to be twofold. On the one hand, there was no confirmed sighting of Pakistani nuclear weapons production (in spite of publicised CIA reports to the contrary); while on the other, a cessation of military assistance to Pakistan also entailed greater difficulty in assisting the Afghan mujahiddin in their struggle with the Soviet Union. The Reagan administration made support for the mujahiddin a *sine qua non* of its foreign policy, and Pakistan was inextricably intertwined with that effort.<sup>16</sup>

In the 1980s, a number of Western industrial states reported conspiratorial acts by overseas Pakistanis. Most were linked to nuclear weapons technology. Some were caught redhanded, for example, Nazir Vaid, in 1985, who was arrested in Houston, Texas, for attempting to smuggle to Pakistan high-speed switches that could be used in assembling nuclear weapons.<sup>17</sup> But even these episodes did not induce the full application of the Symington amendment. CIA reports on the Pakistani



nuclear weapons programme were also leaked to the press, but this too did not affect the Reagan administration's decision to proceed with heavy weapons transfers to Islamabad. Indeed, the completion of a \$3 billion programme opened the way for an even larger \$4 billion assistance package prior to the close of Reagan's second and final term. By this time Pakistan was third on the list of American aid recipients, standing only behind Israel and Egypt.<sup>18</sup>

## THE UNITED STATES AND NUCLEAR PROLIFERATION

On 1 October 1990 the State Department, according to a report in the *New York Times*, made a suggestion to the Congress that aid to Pakistan for 1991–2 be approved without the customary presidential certification specifying that Islamabad was not constructing or did not possess nuclear weapons.<sup>19</sup> On the other hand, unnamed Bush administration officials were reported as wanting to hold up delivery of aid in order to bring pressure on Islamabad to slow its nuclear development project. Moreover, the administration wanted clear assurances from Pakistani authorities that they were not in possession of atomic weapons. As a consequence of Pakistani delaying tactics, the Bush administration was unable to meet the deadline for certification.

Failure of Islamabad to respond positively to Washington's request for assurances possibly played a hand in the report in the *Washington Post* on 9 October that the State Department had blocked the sale of American-made high-energy furnaces to Pakistan. The furnaces were said to be earmarked for Islamabad's nuclear programme. The State Department later denied any knowledge of the transaction and the Pakistan Embassy in Washington issued an official denial, accusing 'elements and groups in the United States' with falsifying data in an effort to discredit Pakistan's peaceful nuclear programme.<sup>20</sup>

Nevertheless, the incident highlighted conflict between the State Department and Bush administration, and left observers to speculate on the reasons for the mixed signals. Moreover, the problem provided grist for the mill of congressional foes of the caretaker Pakistani administration. Congressman David Obey, chairman of the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Foreign Operations, and Stephen Solarz, chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on Asian and Pacific Affairs, used the incident to publicise their dissatisfaction with overall conditions in Pakistan, not the least of which was the country's clandestine nuclear programme.<sup>21</sup> Under congressional and media pressure, an administration

spokesperson tried to clear up the ambiguity by asserting that President Bush had not neglected the problem. The principal thrust of the effort was the allowance of more time to get the Pakistani commitment.

The difficulty faced by the Bush administration was made more complicated by the Gulf crisis. Pakistan gave its support to the UN and American effort directed at forcing Saddam Hussein to withdraw his forces from Kuwait. Islamabad added its voice to those calling for the reinstatement of the Kuwait Emir. Islamabad also said it would send 5000 troops to Saudi Arabia as part of the international force mobilising there.<sup>22</sup> With the conflict in Afghanistan unresolved despite the Soviet withdrawal, and with the Iraqi problem festering, the Bush administration tried to avoid further strain in its relations with Islamabad.

As a longtime American ally, Pakistan enjoyed a latitude of behaviour during both the Reagan and the Bush administrations. This latitude was expressed by Pakistan's Minister of Finance, Sartaj Aziz, who, on 5 October 1990, publicly declared that President Bush would not deny aid to Pakistan while the matter of certification was still being pursued. Aziz noted that all aid commitment schedules with the United States had been signed before 30 September and that the Symington amendment would not affect them in any way.<sup>23</sup> Nevertheless, the White House was not always in a position to fend off attacks that members of Congress directed at Islamabad. Indeed, Congress insisted on certification that Pakistan was not engaged in nuclear weapons procurement or development, and on 1 October 1990, in the absence of such certification, it ordered the immediate suspension of assistance to Pakistan.

While rumours circulated in both Washington and Islamabad that the delay in certification stemmed from the American view of Pakistan's domestic political scene and not from the question of Islamabad's nuclear programme, there was reason to believe the two matters were interrelated. President Bush found it difficult to convince members of Congress, disturbed by the forced removal of Benazir Bhutto, that it should conduct business as usual with Islamabad. Moreover, Bush was faced with the reality of his own intelligence reports that Pakistan had indeed violated the terms and spirit of the Symington amendment.

This was yet another delicate moment in US-Pakistan relations. Faced with the possibility of nuclear escalation in the Gulf crisis, President Bush sought worldwide support for a campaign to halt the further spread of nuclear as well as other weapons of mass destruction. Consistency, as well as credibility, demanded that he impress upon Islamabad the need to open its nuclear installations to international inspection in return for the reinstatement of US aid.

Washington's difficulty in assembling support against nuclear weapons proliferation, however, also involved economics. A number of countries were at best ambiguous on the subject. Most were inclined to see nuclear reactors as one more commodity in the market place. Those states with the capacity to offer their wares sensed the competitiveness of the enterprise, and none wanted to lose an opportunity for commercial advantage. France, for example, returned to the scene of its earlier activities. In February 1990, President Francois Mitterand approved the sale of a nuclear power plant to Pakistan. Mitterand noted that the arrangements were subject to the international norms, controls, and guarantees that apply to all exportation of nuclear material.<sup>24</sup> Mitterand's announcement was an attempt to compensate Pakistan for Paris's decision in 1978 to stop work in Pakistan's plutonium extraction plant. This most recent French offer was also prompted by a 1988 Soviet decision to build two plants in India. Moreover, in 1989 China announced its intention to assist Pakistan's nuclear energy programme. Beijing also promised to provide Pakistan with a reactor, and construction was scheduled to begin in the first months of 1991.

Although Pakistan's past record seemed to militate against its abiding by international rules and procedures concerning nuclear programmes, Mitterand insisted the necessary safeguards would apply to the French sale. But only the naive took him seriously. Washington had forced France to curtail its earlier foray into Pakistani nuclear affairs. Paris, however, refused to yield to the United States a second time.

Washington reminded France that, in 1980, the major nuclear powers had displayed alarm when Germany assisted Argentina in constructing a nuclear reactor. Since that date an unofficial embargo had been established, preventing the selling of large-scale nuclear projects to any country in the Third World that had not signed and ratified the NPT. Thus, the French departure from that understanding hinted at an escalation in the spread of materials that could be used in the making of nuclear weapons. France, however, did not see it that way. Leonard Spector, a Carnegie Endowment specialist on nuclear proliferation, summed up the French action this way: 'Coming after all we know about Pakistan's nuclear programme, it is surprising to see a European country break ranks with the other suppliers and make a sale that appears to condone the Pakistan behavior.'<sup>25</sup> According to the experts, the uranium isotopes obtained from the Kahuta plant, and the tritium believed to be drawn from a smaller facility within the country, gave Pakistan the necessary materials for the production of nuclear weapons.

Whatever the French motive, they could not be unaware of the consequences of their actions. Mitterand, certainly, was not unaware;

nevertheless, he let it be known it was Paris's decision 'to show full confidence in Pakistan'. He followed this comment with the thought that Islamabad may not have signed the NPT, 'but it had always kept by its provisions'.<sup>26</sup> Although American and French styles as well as perceptions of the problem were different, and perhaps too their contributions, each government, in its own way, had in fact 'encouraged' and supplied Pakistan with the means to pursue its choice project.

## NUCLEAR WEAPONS: INDIA–PAKISTAN CONFRONTATION

The spectre of nuclear war hangs over the subcontinent. At no time did the likelihood of a nuclear confrontation appear more credible than in the spring of 1990. France's re-entry as a major player in the nuclear politics of the subcontinent was perhaps directed at deflecting rather than unwittingly prompting Indo-Pakistani confrontation. The Kashmir problem had reached a stage of high intensity, as Kashmiri liberation organisations launched attacks on Indian installations, and New Delhi answered this assault by deploying high concentrations of its forces in the mountain state. Reports filtering out of Kashmir spoke of hundreds if not thousands of casualties as the Indian Army, units of special forces and paramilitary organisations went about their business of crushing the uprising. Indeed, India showed no sign of yielding to international or domestic pressure.

Islamabad's open support for the Kashmiri quest for self-determination was raised to new levels of intensity and urgency by the vivid accounts of carnage and destruction in the mountain state. Efforts by Pakistan to secure assistance from the Organisation of the Islamic Conference and the United Nations, however, have not been fruitful. Either the world was too distracted elsewhere, or many states were reluctant to antagonise New Delhi. Moreover, many governments saw the Kashmir problem as an exclusively internal matter, and they had no intention of interfering in India's domestic affairs, despite the disputed character of the Kashmir issue.

India was relatively free to pursue its interests in Kashmir unhindered by world opinion. Islamabad remained an isolated voice at the United Nations on behalf of the beleaguered Kashmiris. It also stood alone in its defence of the Kashmir *intefada* was an ever-present concern in New Delhi. Both the Kashmiri unrest and the Punjabi/Sikh secessionist movement were blamed on the Pakistanis. India would have the world believe that these problems would not have existed if it were not for Islamabad's 'nefarious' role.<sup>27</sup>

Two wars between India and Pakistan have centred on Kashmir. Both 1947–8 and again in 1965, New Delhi believes its forces prevented Pakistan from overrunning the northern state. Insisting that nothing less than the territorial integrity of India was at stake, New Delhi, nevertheless, did not hesitate to sever East Bengal from Pakistan in 1971. Each successive Indo-Pakistani war proved to be more violent and destructive than the one preceding it. And the fear that a fourth, far more deadly, contest was in the offing, aroused considerable international attention.<sup>28</sup>

The two subcontinental neighbours have made menacing gestures toward one another since 1986. Each time, it was the Pakistanis rather than the Indians who assumed the initiative in defusing the situation. But in the immediate past the two governments have appeared more stable and hence more capable of managing tensions between their countries. Zia's death in 1988 and Rajiv Gandhi's failure at the polls in 1989 removed two substantial figures from the political scene. In the changed circumstances, successor governments have been shaky at best and ineffective at worst. Given an environment of even greater uncertainty, and faced with severe domestic challenges to central authority, the armies of both nations have assumed a presence that does not address itself to the sober resolution of disputes.

India is acknowledged to be the most formidable military power in the Indian Ocean region, let alone within the subcontinent. Islamabad no longer envisages an equal contest should new hostilities erupt. It cannot match the Indians in conventional arms and it would have enormous difficulty in trying to keep up with Indian reserve power in men and material. Moreover, Pakistan is still without an indigenous war industry, and in another conflict with India its military supplies would be even more rapidly expended than in those earlier engagements. If Pakistan was able to manage a week or two of armed conflict with India in the past, it is doubtful whether it could now sustain an attack on targets inside India for more than two or three days. Islamabad's more modern military capability therefore is wholly defensive, and, if Pakistan is again called upon to go it alone, its posture may only be credible if it can provide itself with a nuclear shield.

Pakistan's nuclear arms programme can be judged in this light. Indian pundits certainly see it that way. New Delhi views Pakistan's most recent involvement in Kashmir as proof that Islamabad promotes limited, low-intensity conflict there, while at the same time hoping to forestall an Indian manoeuvre against Pakistan. This gambit suggests high risks that could degenerate into all-out conflict between the two countries.<sup>29</sup> In a period of rising nationalism, with demands for self-determination echoing

in virtually every quarter of the globe, Islamabad publicises the uneven encounter between the Indian Army and Kashmiri liberation fighters. The world needs reminding of that other portion of the unfinished UN agenda, which addresses the global community's decision to let the Kashmiri people determine their own future. Islamabad holds out the hope that New Delhi can be pressured to yield what cannot be taken from it by force.

New Delhi, however, is not about to honour the Kashmiri demand for independence. The Indian Union is judged at risk in such matters, and the breakup of the Union is something the Indian armed forces are pledged to prevent. It certainly would not countenance political action by a weak civilian government, nor would it look kindly on a central administration which sacrificed Indian unity on the altar of abstract international morality. Kashmir is non-negotiable and, if Pakistan anticipates wresting it from Indian control, Islamabad must be prepared to fight for it.

Another scenario connected with current tensions between India and Pakistan is the Indian Army's perception that Pakistan's nuclear capability might be destroyed before it attains maturity. The Indian argument that it would be better to sustain some damage now, as a price for the elimination of Pakistan's nuclear weapons potential, has considerable appeal.<sup>30</sup> According to some of India's generals, India has all the justification it needs for this 'final' war. India would not be satisfied with anything less than the permanent destruction of Islamabad's war-making capacity. Islamabad will not be allowed to limit the conflict to Kashmir, nor can it select the weapons to be used. The world is reminded that India did not hesitate to expand the Kashmiri theatre of conflict to include all of Pakistan in 1965, nor would it hesitate now, even if Pakistan possessed nuclear weapons.

Pakistan will not be permitted to 'blackmail' India into yielding Kashmir. Nor will India grant the Kashmiris the right of self-determination. If Pakistan anticipates a 'political' victory, either through the UN or through any other international organ, it misreads New Delhi's determination to hold all the territory it currently occupies. Pakistan must also recognise the high price the Indians place on protecting their territorial integrity.

The role of the superpowers in this contest is enlightening. New Delhi, like Iraq, entered into a Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation with the Soviet Union in the early 1970s.<sup>31</sup> Like Iraq, India has been the recipient of vast amounts of Soviet-made weaponry. India also manufactures and/or assembles Soviet weapons in its industrial plants. On the other side, Pakistan's long-term security commitments from the United States are not only less substantial, they are also suspect. Islamabad remains almost

totally dependent on American assistance, and that weapons transfer has not been without problems. During the 1965 war, Washington imposed an embargo on arms to the subcontinent which only affected Pakistan. Pakistan's warmaking powers were reduced to primitive levels once its stores were consumed. Moreover, resupply from other countries was blocked by Washington. Thus, while Pakistan was prevented from continuing the war, India's East bloc source, as well as its domestic capacity, gave it the advantage. That advantage was never offset.

The US embargo on arms to Pakistan was sustained officially for ten years, and another five years were to pass before the Reagan administration attempted to address some of the Pakistani concerns. It was this situation, as well as India's detonation of a nuclear device in 1974, that convinced Pakistan's military and political circles that only a nuclear deterrent would suffice.

The Pakistani security dilemma was underlined again with the suspension, pending certification, of American arms to Islamabad in October 1990. Pakistani authorities publicly made light of the problem. Privately, however, they were quite disturbed, especially given Pakistan's commitment of support in the Gulf crisis. Given Washington's pressure on Islamabad, sophisticated, urbane Pakistanis feared the strengthening of fundamentalist elements. If the US insisted on 'isolating' Pakistan, they argued, the fundamentalists could increase their leverage with the Nawaz Sharif government.

If a dramatic shift in US-Pakistan relations was forecast by the events described above; if, indeed, Washington sought to modify its policy in South Asia, given its perceived 'termination' of the Cold War, this may well be the moment for a new policy between Washington and Islamabad. Moreover, that policy would have to take into account Pakistan's status as a nuclear weapons power. The stresses and strains involved in the implementation of the Symington amendment appear out of place in the changed environment, both inside and outside the subcontinent.

## A CONCLUDING NOTE

Both Moscow and Washington have a significant stake in preventing still another war in South Asia. Moreover, since the maturing of the *glasnost* era, Moscow must rethink its position in the Indo-Pakistani conflict. While Moscow retains strong ties with New Delhi, it has its own internal difficulties. Indeed, in the present context of ethnic conflicts, the Soviet Union and India seem no better prepared for the future than Pakistan. It

might be in Moscow's interest to divert India from its long-term effort at changing the map of the subcontinent. Toward that end, the USSR can anticipate a positive response in Washington.

As the Soviet Union tried to discourage the United States from destroying Iraq's war-making capability, especially its chemical and nuclear capacity, so Moscow advised restraint in Indian military circles *vis à vis* Pakistan. Moscow, however, more than the United States, seems prepared to accept nuclear weapons proliferation within the subcontinent. It therefore seems not to fear the spread of nuclear weapons as much as do Washington or New Delhi. Nor does it believe that the possession of nuclear weapons by states of the second rank makes for a more threatened world.

The Mitterand decision to provide Pakistan with another nuclear reactor seems to suggest the French hold a similar view. There is apparent resignation in both Moscow and Paris, if not in Beijing, that countries will become nuclear powers irrespective of the pressure exerted by others. They therefore rationalise that nuclear weapons are essentially defensive, will not be used no matter the provocation, and stand as a reminder of the independence and sovereignty of states possessing them.

This view is not shared in Washington. Although no invidious comparisons are intended, nuclear weapons, whether in Iraqi or in Pakistani hands, are deemed destabilising to world order. Warranted or not, the fear persists that conditions exist in both the Gulf region and the Indo-Pakistani subcontinent that can negate rational decisionmaking. The United States, of course, would deny nuclear weapons to all additional Third World nations if it had the capacity to do so. It has not, however, and the intensification of the quarrel between Islamabad and New Delhi over Kashmir is a case in point.

In May 1990, President Bush sent Robert Gates, a deputy national security advisor, to Pakistan with instructions to do what he could to pressure the Pakistanis to lower the level of invective directed at New Delhi. The Soviets were encouraged to perform the same task with their Indian associates. Washington's chief concern was not simply the likelihood of another Indo-Pakistani War, but of one that might well lead to the use of nuclear weapons.<sup>32</sup> Uncited US 'intelligence agencies' had sent urgent warnings to President Bush that the chances of war in South Asia in the autumn of 1990 were 50–50. Stephen Solarz had also visited the region and had returned with the view that 'the continuing tension between India and Pakistan as a result of Kashmir is the most serious threat of a major military conflict anywhere in the world at the present time.'<sup>33</sup> Solarz's observations preceded the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait.



The Gates mission was somewhat responsible for the decision to reopen diplomatic negotiations between New Delhi and Islamabad, and the Indian Foreign Secretary visited Pakistan for high-level talks during the summer. Gates hoped to get the antagonists to enter into 'confidence-building measures', such as the notification of military exercises. Although he achieved little tangible success, there was a demonstrably lower level of criticism from both capitals following his tour, and for the moment, tensions were at least eased. India announced the withdrawal of armoured units from a desert training area near the Pakistani border, both they were still in place in September. Islamabad insisted the most urgent requirement was a standdown and reduction of forces on their mutual frontier. India, however, has yet to meet this test. On 7 October President Ishaq Khan was obliged to note the readiness of the Pakistani Army to defend the country's frontiers. 'The standard of training, defence preparedness and morale of the Pakistan Army is very high and if war is thrust upon us, we shall teach the enemy an exemplary lesson,' he said.<sup>34</sup>

The twin issues involving the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait and Benazir's dismissal, once again underlined the volatility and unpredictable character of the region. They pointed again to the misgivings and forebodings in Washington, as elsewhere, that the world was passing into a new period of nuclear weapons procurement; that the termination of superpower jousting had opened the way for Third World developments that heretofore had been more or less controllable.

Did the crisis in the Gulf reduce or elevate the possibility of war between India and Pakistan? Answers do not come easily, but the educated response would suggest a reduced risk. The Gulf situation and the Kashmir problem are joined by the threat of nuclear conflict. In India and Pakistan we have an idea as to what can be expected in future Israeli-Arab hostilities. Compromise solutions that satisfy the principals are not on the horizon.

In the case of India and Pakistan there is the possibility of the first real conflict between states with nuclear accessibility, if not immediate capability. Even if the nuclear stockpiles are absent, both countries, but notably India, have the capacity to produce enough weapons on short order to shatter many of the subcontinent's major urban centres. The casualties from such a war would be catastrophic, and the desolation would extend far beyond the state of Kashmir. Indian political leaders are already on record with the view that if war again comes to the subcontinent, 'Pakistan will cease to exist.'<sup>35</sup>

Since the advent of the nuclear age, nuclear weapons powers have carefully avoided direct challenges. The Soviet Union did not enter the Korean War, nor did it entertain sending forces to Indochina. The same

can be said for the United States, which scrupulously avoided direct involvement in Afghanistan. The same cannot be said for the principals in South Asia. Moreover, the demise of Benazir Bhutto may have diminished the opportunity for conciliatory gestures. General Mirza Aslam Baig and President Ghulam Ishaq Khan will not yield to Indian promises or declared intentions. Having already committed considerable resources to the Kashmiri *intefada*, it would be difficult for them to back away from their commitments. On the Indian side, V. P. Singh has fallen, and weak successor governments will have difficulty in filling the political vacuum in New Delhi. Although there are signs of a scaling down of Soviet military assistance to India, Moscow continues to see India as an important neighbour in a brittle zone of political activity. The future role of the Indian military establishment, its political neutrality, therefore, may be tested to the limit in the decade ahead.

The immediate problem, however, seems to address Pakistan's assumed capacity to produce nuclear weapons. Indeed the 'first use' of nuclear weapons may be something Islamabad cannot avoid, given its many disadvantages *vis à vis* India. Islamabad does not want to see its nuclear facilities decapitated by an Indian preemptive strike; and it may find itself faced with just such a possibility in the initial phase of a conventional war. If so, Islamabad must face the terrible dilemma of using its small nuclear arsenal before it is destroyed and the country is exposed to the massive military might of its neighbour.

Deterring India from attacking Pakistan, while at the same time pressing New Delhi to grant the Kashmiris self-determination, are not consistent policies. Islamabad had yet to signal to New Delhi or to the world that Kashmir is not worth a nuclear war. Moreover, even in a conventional war New Delhi offers no guarantees that it will not seek the destruction of Pakistan's entire weapons arsenal. Pakistanis know they cannot wrest Kashmir from Indian control by engaging in conventional war or nuclear war, but the festering problem does not rule out either possibility. Both Islamabad and New Delhi appear locked in a classic 'Catch-22' war game and neither appears ready to face the tragic realities of their continuing contest.

## NOTES

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22. President Ghulam Ishtiaq Khan insisted that the Pakistani troops sent to Saudi Arabia were at Riyadh's request and not as a consequence of American pressure. The troops were in Saudi Arabia as a defensive measure and assigned to protect the holy sites in Mecca and Medina.
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34. Spector, 'India-Pakistan War: It Could Be Nuclear'.
35. *Ibid.*

# Appendix: List of Seminar Participants

Below is a list of the participants at the International Seminar on 'Dilemmas of National Security and Cooperation in South Asia', in honour of Dr Justice Javid Iqbal, formerly of the Supreme Court of Pakistan, 16–17 November 1990.

**Dr Justice Javid Iqbal**, Lahore, Pakistan

**Professor Nasira Iqbal**, Lahore, Pakistan

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**Fr. Kail C. Ellis**, Dean, Arts and Sciences, Villanova University

**Maj. Gen. Imtiaz Ali**, former Military Secretary to the late Prime Minister Z. A. Bhutto, Rawalpindi, Pakistan

**Mr Mushahid Hussain**, Islamabad, Pakistan

**Dr Shireen Hunter**, Center for Strategic and International Studies, Washington, DC

**Dr Saleem Qureshi** and **Dr Regula Qureshi**, Alberta, Canada

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**Dr John Schultz**, National War College, Washington, DC

**Dr Paul Gutland**, National War College, Washington, DC

**Lt Col. Roger Cunningham**, Pentagon

**Col. James Corcoran**, Director of Asian Studies, US Army War College

**Col. Donald Boose**, Director, National Security Secretary, US Army War College

**Mrs Lil Boose**, Carlisle, Pennsylvania

**Col. Rich Crites**, Pentagon

**Lt Col. Lawrence Velte**, Pentagon

**Dr Thomas P. Thornton**, School of Advanced International Studies, Washington, DC

**Dr Raju G.C. Thomas**, Marquette University

**Dr Melvin Goodman**, National War College, Washington, DC

**Dr Alvin Z. Rubinstein**, University of Pennsylvania

**Dr Maya Chadda**, William Paterson College

**Dr Robert Wirsing**, University of South Carolina

**Dr Sumit Ganguly**, Hunter College, New York

**Dr Lawrence Ziring**, Western Michigan University

**Dr Craig Baxter**, Juniata College

**Dr Riaz Ahmad**, Detroit, Michigan

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**Mohammad Toor**, Indus Society of North America, Illinois

**Kamran Khan**, Chicago

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